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Samuel Hosdick II

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Samuel Hosdick III

1710 ~ 1792

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Solomon Hosdick

1776 ~ 1838

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1817 ~ 1892

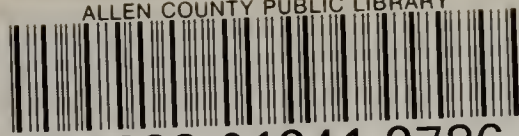
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Frank Sheldon Hosdick

1851 ~ 1927



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COMPLIMENTS OF  
RAYMOND B. FOSDICK  
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT





Annals  
*of the*  
FOSDICK FAMILY



Annals  
*of the*  
FOSDICK FAMILY  
*by*  
RAYMOND B. FOSDICK

*"There is no difference between past  
and present; every moment a portion  
of our prosaic present drops off and  
is swallowed up into the poetic past."*

G. M. TREVELYAN.

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL COMPANY, INC.  
New York



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To  
MY FATHER  
FRANK SHELDON FOSDICK  
*In Memoriam*





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## FOREWORD

**T**HIS book is not a genealogy in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term. I have tried to picture eight generations of an American family against the background of their times. I have been interested not only in the ancestors as links in a chain, but in the way they lived, their environment, their problems, their strengths and weaknesses. Over a stretch of more than 300 years, the Fosdick generations in America have played their role, generally a humble role, in building the country; they have been part of the American scene, and my interest has been as much in the scene as in the actors. Consequently, this book is what its name implies—annals, rather than a genealogy.

In 1891 Lewis L. Fosdick, of Jamaica, Long Island, published his book on the Fosdick family. It represented many years of painstaking research, and it brought together for the first time in a printed volume all that was known about the American family, with particular reference to the Oyster Bay branch. Since that time considerable research has been carried on by various members of the family, notably—so far as I have been able to discover—by Mr. Charles Fosdick, of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and by his nephew, Judge Frederick W. Fosdick, of Boston, Massachusetts. Charles Fosdick's study covered nearly 30 years, and at his death in 1925 he left a variety of papers and correspondence which I have had the privilege of examining. Similarly, Judge Fosdick's research extended over many years, and, just before he died in 1943, he gave me all his voluminous notes and letters. Judge Fosdick and I carried on a correspondence about the family and its branches for nearly ten years, and I had had an earlier correspondence with Charles Fosdick. Lewis L. Fosdick I met just once—in 1910—when he discussed with me at length some of the problems he encountered in piecing together the genealogy of the family.

My own absorption in family history goes back nearly sixty years, but the urgencies of a busy life have given me no leisure



to pursue it except in a desultory fashion. It has been rather a deep and ineradicable interest which I have taken up at scattered moments. Only recently have I had an opportunity to assemble my facts and conclusions.

Two things should be borne in mind in looking over this book. First, it should be read in connection with Lewis Fosdick's *The Fosdick Family*. I have not attempted to repeat the material which he so successfully brought together. In large part it merely supplements his work. Second, I have confined my interest and attention—as Lewis Fosdick did—to the Oyster Bay branch of the family and, even more narrowly than he did, to one generation that came from Oyster Bay, i.e., the Boston Valley branch in Erie County, New York. I have had no time to go further, and doubtless the latter part of this book will be a disappointment to those members of the family descended from collateral lines. However, we all go back to Stephen and his son John, and the earlier pages of this manuscript may be of some interest to the remote cousins of the generation that crossed New York State in a covered wagon in 1819 to settle in Boston Valley.

It gives me genuine satisfaction to express my great indebtedness to the many individuals and organizations that have helped me. It is impossible to mention them all by name, but I would like to record the gracious services which I received from the Public Record Office in London, the London Society of Genealogists, the Library of Congress, the National Archives in Washington, the New York Public Library, the Grosvenor Library of Buffalo, the New England Historic Genealogical Society of Boston, the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, the New York State Library in Albany, the New London County Historical Society, the Nantucket Historical Association, the New-York Historical Society and the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society. I am peculiarly indebted to Miss Lilian J. Redstone, of Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, whose wide knowledge and skillful research threw much new light on the origins of the Fosdick family in that country; and to Mrs. Earl Dye and Merl Schiffman, of Boston, Erie County, N. Y., for their generous assistance in helping me reconstruct the frontier life of my great-grandfather, Solomon Fosdick. To the members of the Fosdick family—both in America and England—I would want to express my grateful appreciation of their helpfulness and patience, particularly to

Mr. Charles Fosdick and Judge Frederick W. Fosdick. Wherever in this manuscript I have used the material furnished by these two friends, I have indicated it by a footnote. Most of all I am indebted to Lewis L. Fosdick, without whose book all of us would be in the dark in regard to the development of the family in America.

RAYMOND B. FOSDICK.

Newtown, Connecticut.  
October 1, 1953.





## CHAPTER I

### THE ORIGIN OF THE FOSDICK FAMILY

**E**IGHT miles south of Boston in Lincolnshire, England, lies a small village called Fosdyke. It takes its name from the great Roman road, the Fosse Way, which ran diagonally across England from Bath, through Cirencester and Leicester, to Lincoln, and which south of Boston crossed the Welland River near its entrance into the Wash. The name appears to come from the Latin *fossa* and the Old English *dic* or *dyke*, both of which seem to convey the same idea, i.e., ditch or earthwork.<sup>1</sup> In a sense, therefore, the name is tautological: the first syllable was taken over from the Latin by the Romanized Britons, and to this was added an explanatory Old English *dic*.<sup>2</sup>

The village of Fosdyke goes back to very early days and is mentioned in the Domesday Book of William the Conqueror (1085 A. D.). The following literal excerpt is taken from the Domesday Book:

In Fossdyke there are twelve bovates of land rateable to gelt tax. . . . One sokeman and one villein have there two oxen.

During medieval times the name of the village was spelled in various ways, i.e., Fosdig, Fosdik, Fossedike, Fossedik, Fosdike, and Fosdicke.<sup>3</sup> According to old custom, *ff* often was used as a form of the initial *F*. Thus the name Fosdyke frequently appears as *ffosdyke*.

I visited the village of Fosdyke in 1913. It is a quiet and rather picturesque little place, and with its windmills and dykes

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<sup>1</sup> The road was presumably given its name because it had a prominent ditch on one side or both.

<sup>2</sup> The same explanation would account for the name of the canal—the Fossdyke—which the Romans dug to connect the Witham River with the Trent in the city of Lincoln in Lincolnshire. Even today after nearly 2000 years it is still one of the most important trade arteries of the city, and is still called the Fossdyke. I should add, however, that on this question of the origin of the name the authorities do not entirely agree. I am following Mawer and Stenton rather than Ekwall.

<sup>3</sup> On an old map, dated 1576, found in the *Domesday Book which Relates to Lincolnshire*, I noted that the town Fosdyke is spelled Fosdick.

it is somewhat reminiscent of Holland. When I saw it, it had a store or two, a few houses, and a church. There have been three churches on the same site, the oldest going back to Norman times. This was torn down in 1756 on account of its ruinous state. The second church was burned in 1870, and the third church dates from the latter year.

During the middle ages the church of Fosdyke, as was true in many communities, was the center of the life of the village. Frequent references to it are made in various wills. For example, in the will of Richard Ording of Fosdyke, probated in 1514, the following quaint bequest occurs:

I will that 4d. be taken yerly by the said cherche wardens for to fynd and kepe a candell of halfe ponde of wax to be made twyse in the yere for to lyghte and burne in the said cherche of flosdyke at the highe messe every hallowdy for evermore.<sup>4</sup>

To my surprise I found no one by the name of Fosdick, or any form of that name, living in the village of Fosdyke, or indeed in the whole of Lincolnshire. Moreover, although I talked with many people in both Boston and Fosdyke, no one could recall having heard the name in connection with any resident. Futhermore I went through the parish registers in the church of Fosdyke from their beginning in 1575 up to the present time. They showed births (baptisms), marriages, and deaths. The name Fosdick did not appear—nor did any form of it. A similar search of the parish registers of Boston, Lincolnshire, likewise failed to reveal the name.

In the same year, 1913, I examined the current directories and telephone books of a number of cities in England and Scotland. As far as my inquiries enabled me to go, I discovered no Fosdicks in Scotland nor in the west or north of England and none in the south. However, the name is very common in the east of England, i.e., in Norfolk and Suffolk. It is spelled Fosdick, Forsdick, Forsdike, and Fosdike. In Ipswich, Suffolk, there were, in 1913, five families by the name of Fosdick listed in the directory. I talked with a number of them. One, a Mrs. George Fosdick, told me that she sometimes spelled her name *Forsdike* and that "this was the old spelling." None of the family that I interviewed knew anything about ancestry.

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<sup>4</sup> *Lincoln Wills*, edited by C. W. Foster, Vol. I, p. 55.



The men of the family appeared to be day laborers and the conditions under which they lived, from an American point of view, seemed rather drab and dismal. A chauffeur with whom I talked told me that near his old home (Whitnesham) there was a large family of Fosdicks who were farm laborers and who could not read or write.

During the first World War, when I was on duty in London (1918), I met a Mr. Frederick H. Fosdick, of Ipswich, Suffolk, who had a responsible position with the Government and was the owner of a large coal company. However, he knew nothing of the family origin. He said he had understood that it was of Dutch descent and that it had come over to England during the religious troubles on the Continent in the 16th Century. It is interesting to note that the director of the British Museum is Sir John Forsdyke, the well-known classical archeologist. I have had many talks with him about genealogy, and there is little doubt that his line and the American Fosdicks are descended from the same source. At least they both came not only from Suffolk in East Anglia, but from the same part of Suffolk. Sir John knows nothing about his family beyond his great-grandfather, who was a miller and farmer in Hasketon, near Ipswich. His grandfather for personal reasons changed the spelling of the family name from *Forsdick* to *Forsdyke*.

It seems logical to believe that the family of Fosdicks, which is commonly found today in Norfolk and Suffolk, must have some association with the village of Fosdyke in Lincolnshire. It must be remembered that surnames were not used in England until the Norman Conquest and that they did not come into general use among the people until the reign of Edward II (about 1325). These surnames were sometimes based upon an occupation (for example, Smith); sometimes upon a physical description (for example, Black or White or Brown); and sometimes upon a locality where the person resided or from which he had come. The surname Fosdick obviously belongs to this last classification, and generally the early form of place surname was preceded by the French *de* meaning *from*. Thus we would expect *de Fospick* to be the early form of the Fospick surname. In the summer of 1937 I made some studies in the library of the Society of Genealogists in London. I came across the record of an early will (1314 A.D.) made by *Hawyse de*

*ffosdyk*.<sup>5</sup> This will was probated in the diocese of Lincoln, in which diocese the village of Fosdyke is situated. Probate courts were ecclesiastical courts in those days and the city of Lincoln was the seat of ecclesiastical authority where wills in the diocese were presented for probate. Obviously the will in question refers to a woman *Hawyse* (Latin form: *Hawysia*) who lived, or whose fathers had lived, in Fosdyke. The will provided for the appointment of guardians for the children of the deceased—the children's names being Beatrice, James, John and Elena.

It would seem not beyond the limits of probability to believe that the family origin as far as name is concerned lies in some such circumstance as this. It is, of course, not impossible to believe that *Hawyse de ffosdyk* was herself an ancestor; but even if she were not an ancestor of the family today, there would seem to be substantial reason to assume that the surname was associated with the village of Fosdyke in the manner which I have described.

I was unable to discover the name of Fosdick in Lincolnshire in any year following this will of *Hawyse de ffosdyk*.

The probate records of Suffolk show that as early as 1474 the name Fosdick was already established in that county. These records contain ten references to wills made by persons bearing the name Fosdick, dating from 1474 to 1591. The names are as follows, with approximate dates of probate:

John Fosdyk of Wetheringsett—1474  
 Reginald Fosdicke of Clopton—1501  
 Robert Fosdicke of Dallinghoe—1506  
 John Fosdicke of Burgh—1518  
 William Fosdecke of Helmingham—1550  
 Botolph Fosdike of Sudbury—1554  
 John Fosdick of Stonham Aspell—1557  
 John Fosdick of Helmingham—1569  
 Xpiane Fosdicke of Framsdon—1584  
 Thomas Fosdick of Sudbury—1591<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Alfred Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills* (1888), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Calendar of Wills of Ipswich* (1444-1600). Also Crossfield's lists of wills probated in the Court of Archdeaconry of Sudbury and/or Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds.

Many wills by members of the Fosdick family were probated in Suffolk in the 17th Century. Some are listed in the Calendar of Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, whose jurisdiction covered only the eastern half of the county; others appear in the records of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, mentioned above, whose jurisdiction was the western half of the county; still others are listed in the



The will of Robert Fosdicke of Dallinghoe, whose name appears in the preceding list, contains three specific requests:

- (1) To be buried in Dallinghoe churchyard.
- (2) To the high altar of the same—12d.
- (3) To the Chantry of the Candlebeam in the same church—6/8.<sup>7</sup>

The Fosdicks of these pre-Reformation days were obviously good Catholics. The fact that some members of the family disposed of their property by will seems to indicate that they had reached an advantageous position in the middle-class society of their time.

In 1479, five years after the will of John Fosdyk of Wetheringsett, the surname appears in the records of Ipswich, sixteen miles to the south. In that year, John Wentworth, a clerk in Holy Orders, was fined for entering the house of a farmer, John Fer, and assaulting Margery Fosdyk.<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, for a century and a half, the name appears in the local records in connection with law suits, deeds, and taxes; and in 1603-04, when the plague was raging in Ipswich, a William Fosdycke was appointed to bury the dead.<sup>9</sup>

The Subsidy Return for Suffolk of 1524, which was a tax levy in the reign of Henry VIII, shows three Fosdicks in the county paying taxes in that year, all of them named John; one from Helmingham, one from Stonham Aspell, and one from Kesgrave.<sup>10</sup> Similarly the Subsidy Return for Suffolk of 1568 shows three Fosdicks paying taxes: Richard from Helmingham, Lion-

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Calendar of Suffolk wills in the Consistory Court of Norwich. These three sources show the following Fosdick wills for the early part of the century:

- Andrew Forsdick of Bealings—1614
- John Fosdick of Framlingham—1616
- John Fosdicke of Sudbury—1620
- Henry Fosdike of Beyton—1623
- John Foresdike of Assington—1628
- Laura Fosdick of Creting—1630
- Catherine Fosdick of Framlington—1633
- Marie Fosdick of Saxmundham—1637

Numerous Fosdick wills also appear in the Suffolk records for the 18th Century.

<sup>7</sup> *Suffolk Wills* (transcribed by hand), Vol. IV, in the library of the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

<sup>8</sup> Corporation Records of Ipswich.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Citations supplied by Lilian J. Redstone, of Woodbridge, Suffolk, England.

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that in the Subsidy Return for Suffolk in 1327 the name Fosdick does not appear. The implication is either that there were no Fosdicks in Suffolk at this time or that they did not have sufficient property to be taxed.

ell from the same place, and Robert from Ipswich. In 1538 the name *R. Fosdyke*, of Wickham Market, Suffolk, appears on the Muster Roll of the Territorials, or County Militia, as an archer.<sup>11</sup>

A study of the parish registers during the 16th Century shows that the family was widely represented in Suffolk, particularly in the territory immediately surrounding Ipswich. In a number of parishes<sup>12</sup> I was able to trace families of Fosdicks whose names appear under the classification of births, marriages, and deaths in the localities where they lived. It would be possible, of course, to make up tentative tables of genealogy for these various parish families, but in the absence of further information the chance of error would be great. It is interesting to note that during this period the given names of Biblical origin, which were later adopted in America by our Puritan forefathers, were not in use, i.e., Samuel, Solomon, etc. In Suffolk in the 16th Century there were many John Fosdicks, and the names Robert, Thomas, Richard, and William were frequent. Among the women's names, Elizabeth, Alice, Margaret, Mary, and Rose predominated.<sup>13</sup>

It is perhaps significant that, as far as the 16th Century is concerned, in no other county except Suffolk was the surname Fosdick widely distributed. Fosdicks appear in Norfolk in the 17th Century, but this was after the emigration of Stephen Fosdick to America in 1635.

Subsequent to the emigration to America, the Fosdick family continued to flourish in Suffolk. The name appears frequently in the parish registers and on the tax returns,<sup>14</sup> and it is possible to trace whole families in terms of births and deaths in the vicinity of Ipswich and Woodbridge.

<sup>11</sup> See Edgar Powell, "Muster Rolls of the Territorials in Tudor Times," reprinted from *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History*, Vol. XV, Part II (1914).

<sup>12</sup> Such as Nacton, Great Bealings, St. Nicholas (Ipswich), St. Stephens (Ipswich), St. Clements (Ipswich), St. Mary Elms (Ipswich), Wingfield, Burgh, Brundish, Thorington, Orford, Assington, Sudbury, Little Waldingfield, Semer, Erwarton, and Belstead.

<sup>13</sup> The surname was variously spelled Fosdick, Fosdicke, Fosdyke, Fosdike, Fosdycke, Fosedycke, Fostdicke, Fosdicke, and Fausdycke. As noted above, *ff* was frequently used for the *F*. Judge Fosdick of Boston listed 118 ways in which the name Fosdick has been spelled or misspelled in America.

<sup>14</sup> Thus in *Able Men of Suffolk—1638* (edited by Charles E. Banks)—a muster roll of all able-bodied men in the county between the ages of sixteen and sixty



The material discovered disposes, I think, of the tradition held by some branches of the family that the Fosticks are of Dutch descent. Long before the Dutch emigration to England in the 16th and 17th Centuries the family name was well established in Suffolk. If my theory of the origin of the family of Fostick in the village of Fosdyke is correct, it would mean that some ancestor, before the beginning of parish registers (in 1538), came south from Lincolnshire and settled in Suffolk. The Wars of the Roses, which ended in 1485, were times of general unrest in England, and it is possible that the move occurred during that century. The existence of the will of John Fosdyk of Wetheringsett as early as 1474, to which I have referred above, would seem to indicate that at least one representative of the family was established in Suffolk 109 years before the birth of Stephen Fostick, the progenitor of the American family.

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—the following names appear:

Lionell Fosticke—Levington  
Richard Fosticke—Kirton  
Robert Fostick—Bredfield  
Thomas Fostick—Otley  
Robert Fostick }  
Thomas Fostick } Martlesham  
John Fostick—Saxmundham

In the following year, 1639-1640, the "Ship Money returns for Suffolk," a tax role for the county, lists the following names:

Lionell Fostike—Nacton  
Richard Fosticke—Levington  
Andrew Fosticke—Otley  
Andrew Fosticke—Holbroke  
Thomas Fostike—Bealings magna.

## CHAPTER II

### STEPHEN FOSDICK IN ENGLAND

STEPHEN FOSDICK, the founder of the American branch, a carpenter by trade, came from Wenham magna (frequently called Great Wenham) in Suffolk, England. This tiny hamlet lies fourteen miles southwest of Ipswich on the southern border of the county and is within a few miles of most of the villages and towns mentioned in the preceding chapter, where families of Fosdicks were living both before and after the year of Stephen's emigration to America, i.e., 1635. Indeed, a twenty-mile radius, with Ipswich as a center, would embrace most of the localities where the name Fosdick was found as of that time.

Whether Stephen Fosdick was born in Wenham magna we do not know, for unfortunately the parish registers of that village prior to 1642 have been lost.<sup>1</sup> Our knowledge of where Stephen came from is derived largely from the records of a law suit in which he was involved as a witness. The law suit grew out of a long dispute over the building of a house in Dedham, Essex, seven miles south of Wenham magna; the dispute was between the owner as plaintiff and the contractor who had been in charge of the job as defendant.<sup>2</sup> Five carpenters had worked on the house and among them had been "Steven Fosdicke." When the suit in the Court of Requests was started in 1636, a commission was appointed to hear the evidence, and a series of interrogatories was drawn up as a basis for the examination of

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<sup>1</sup> The parish registers show an earlier Stephen Fosdick, who died in Semer in 1617. Semer was a small hamlet lying about fifteen miles northwest of Great Wenham. In 1621 two Fosdick girls, Rachel and Elizabeth, were married in the same parish; and in 1622 the death of "Joane Fosdick, widow" is recorded, presumably the wife of Stephen. No births for the family of Stephen and Joane are recorded, although the register includes the year 1583 when Stephen the emigrant was born. If this elder Stephen was the father of our Stephen, he obviously moved to Semer after 1583. The point is significant only because the given name Stephen was not in common use in Suffolk in the 16th century, and some connection between the two Stephens seems not improbable.

<sup>2</sup> The case is *Goulston vs. Adams*, Public Record Office, London, Court of Requests, Charles 1, 2/743. It was discovered by Charles E. Banks, the historian and genealogist, while going through the papers of this court. This court was a court of equity, and was often known as "the poor man's court."



the parties in interest, including the five carpenters. By that time, however, Stephen Fosdick had sailed for America. One of the interrogatories reads as follows:

What did you heare Steven Fosdicke affirme and saye before he went beyonde the Seas concernyng the buylding of the house in question?

One of the witnesses, Edward Cardinall, whose family was connected with Great Wenham, testified on August 18, 1636, as to what Stephen Fosdick, "who is now gone into New England, beeing a workeman about the buildinge of the said house," had told him. Incidentally, what Stephen had said was strongly in favor of the defendant, that is, of the contractor by whom he had been employed.

The case dragged on for another year and a new commission was appointed and new interrogatories were framed. On April 13, 1637, Stephen Fosdick himself appeared in person before the commission at Stratford, Suffolk, about seven miles from Great Wenham, and gave testimony in the case. Obviously he had returned from America, although it seems difficult to believe that he would have come back for the sole purpose of participating in this litigation. It seems more likely that he returned to pick up his family or some members of his family, or for some other personal reason. In any event, his testimony begins as follows:

Stephen Fosdicke of Great Wenham in the Countie of Suffolk, Carpenter, aged fitye and twoe yeares or thereabouts, sworne and examined, saith as followeth—

He then described how he had worked on the building of the house as a carpenter and his long acquaintance with the plaintiff and the defendant. At no place in his testimony is any mention made of his having been overseas. About the plaintiff, Marie Goulston, he made this caustic comment:

It is an usuall thinge for the said Marie to fall out and Contende with her workemen after ther worke is done, and (she) would often tymes abridge them of part of ther wages due for ther worke.

It seems obvious that Stephen, returning from America, gave his old home in Great Wenham as his address when he appeared before the commission to give his testimony. Perhaps



Stephen Fosdicke of great wenham in the Countie of Suffolk Carpenter aged Fiftye and two yeares or there-  
abouts sworn and examined saith as followeth—

“STEPHEN fosdicke of great wenham in the Countie of Suffolk Carpenter aged Fiftye and two yeares or there-  
abouts sworn and examined saith as followeth—”

Opening paragraph of the testimony of Stephen Fosdick at Stratford, Suffolk, England, April 13, 1637, before  
the Commissioners of the Court of Requests in the case of *Goulston vs. Adams*. (From the original proceedings in  
the Public Record Office, London. The testimony of the witnesses was transcribed on parchment sheets 13 inches  
by 15.)

he had relatives living there. Perhaps, as I have said, his own family, or some of them, were still there, waiting for him to take them to the home which he had established across the seas.

There is another clue, however, that ties him to Great Wenham. In 1622, one Edward Vince of Great Wenham made a will which was admitted to probate the following year. One of the bequests in this will is as follows:

Item. I give unto Hanna Forsdike my god-daughter, daughter of Stephen Forsdike, six shillings eight pence to buye her a Bible.<sup>3</sup>

Hanna (or Hannah, as the American records spell it) was Stephen's oldest daughter. She was born in 1615 and would thus have been eight years old at the time of the bequest. She accompanied her father to America.<sup>4</sup> The domicile of Stephen Fosdick in Great Wenham seems well established, although the lack of the parish registers is admittedly a handicap.<sup>5</sup>

Great Wenham, undoubtedly so called to distinguish it from Little Wenham a mile away, is today, and probably always was, merely a hamlet. Its roots go back to the Saxon era and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of William the Conqueror.<sup>6</sup> I visited it in 1947. It consists of a few farm cottages and buildings, situated in the beautiful rolling hills of East Anglia, and it has a total population of about 150 people.<sup>7</sup> The 440th American fighter squadron was located here during the last war, and in 1947 the village was still scarred by an airstrip and numerous Quonset huts. However, only two cottages had been

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<sup>3</sup> Archdeaconry of Suffolk, filed wills for 1622, No. 113.

<sup>4</sup> She married James Barrett and lived at Malden, Massachusetts, where she died in 1681 at the age of 66.

<sup>5</sup> One other detail may be mentioned which connects the name Fosdick with Great Wenham. In 1632 John Horne and Mirable Fosdicke were married at Layham, a village twelve miles from Great Wenham. (Boyd's Suffolk Marriage Index.) He seems to have died the following year. (Layham Register.) In 1659 the parish register for Great Wenham shows the death of "the widow Horne, otherwise called Merebell Ffosdrick."

It is perhaps significant that in the Suffolk tax returns and muster rolls of the 16th and 17 centuries the name Fosdick does not appear in relation to Great Wenham either before or after the emigration. This might conceivably indicate that Stephen Fosdick was the only one of the family who lived there. From the Muster Roll of 1638 and the Ship Money Tax of 1639-1640 (referred to in Chapter I), it seems fairly obvious that Stephen left no male Fosdicks behind him in Great Wenham when he sailed in 1635.

<sup>6</sup> In the 15th and 16th centuries, and perhaps earlier, Great Wenham was frequently called Burnt Wenham, probably referring to some unusual conflagration.

<sup>7</sup> Its population in 1901 was 184.



removed for military purposes, and it is probable that the place will ultimately be returned to agriculture.

What distinguishes Great Wenham today is its 14th century church—the Church of St. John—in Early English style with a late perpendicular tower and with a leper window or squint in the south wall. Some of the church furniture is of the 15th century, e.g., the tiles at the east end, and there is a 15th century bench-end from this church at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The tower has three bells, on one of which is the inscription: “Richardus Bowler me fecit 1592.” The Puritans of Cromwell’s day smashed 22 images and pictures in the church of Little Wenham, but they reported “there was nothing to reform” in the church of Great Wenham.<sup>8</sup>

This is the church which Stephen Fosdick undoubtedly attended or with which he was familiar, and it has probably changed but little since his time, except that the windows now contain new glass and the whitewashed interior is perhaps barer than it was in Stephen’s pre-Cromwellian days. Probably Little Wenham, a mile away, would seem to Stephen even more familiar, for its 13th century castle and its 14th century church are both extraordinarily well preserved.

Stephen was married to Anna Harre in 1612 in Hadleigh, eight miles north of Great Wenham. Both Stephen and Anna were recorded in the register as single. The fact that their names do not appear again in the Hadleigh register in connection with the baptisms of their children or with the death of Anna herself bears out the contention that Stephen lived elsewhere, probably in Great Wenham. The date of Anna’s death we do not know, but she bore him six children. His second wife was Sarah Wetherell whom he married in 1624 and who accompanied him to America. There were two children by this marriage. Where he married his second wife and what her parentage was are not known, but there is some reason to believe, as will later be seen, that she came from Maidstone, Kent.

One other record has been discovered which bears on Stephen’s life in England. When he was 26 years old, three years before his marriage, he was haled into court in Colchester,

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<sup>8</sup> *Journal of William Dowsing, 1643-1644* (Suffolk Institute of Arch. Trans. IV 253.)

Essex. This town is about twenty miles southwest of Great Wenham. On June 17, 1609, Stephen and four others in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen were summoned to "purge themselves" of the charge of "playing at stayles upon the 28 May last in the tyme of divine service."<sup>9</sup> A stayle in Elizabethan times was a decoy used to attract small birds so that they could be trapped, and Shakespeare uses the word on several occasions. Written in the margin opposite Stephen's name in the yellowing pages of the court record are the words: "He ys Run awaye." And there the case ends. He apparently preferred to put the River Stour between himself and his accusers, for in his own home town of Great Wenham he was in the jurisdiction of another court. What Stephen was doing in Colchester is of course not known. He may have been living there at the time or visiting there. Being a carpenter, he might have had work in many towns and villages in the neighborhood of his home.<sup>10</sup>

We know that Stephen Fosdick was born in 1583. Undoubtedly his parents and grandparents for a century before him had lived in Suffolk. The fact that Stephen was a carpenter would indicate that while he came from humble circumstances, he belonged to that sturdy middle class that was just beginning to assert itself in England. We know, too, that he had some education and that he was able to read and write. There were schools in Suffolk in Tudor days, both "grammar schools" that prepared their students for Cambridge, and elementary schools where reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught. Stephen Fosdick undoubtedly attended one of these types of schools. His signature attached to his will is a bold example of Elizabethan

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<sup>9</sup> Archdeaconry of Colchester Records (Essex Record Office) D/ACA 33, Act Book Colchester and Tendring Deaneries, May 1609-May 1611. The Court was the Archdeacon's Surrogate. The four other men implicated were John Mott, John Bowers the Elder, Thomas Bowers and Nicholas Knockell. This record was discovered by Charles E. Banks.

<sup>10</sup> The possibility exists, of course, that Stephen Fosdick might have been born in Colchester and have gone later to Wenham magna. Unfortunately, the parish records of St. Mary Magdalen prior to 1721 appear to be lost, and we are unable to determine the question. Another point in this connection is whether the Stephen Fosdick mentioned in the Diocesan Record is the same Stephen Fosdick who lived at Wenham magna. The probabilities are that the same man is involved, because the two places were only a few miles apart and moreover the given name Stephen was quite unique in relation to the surname Fosdick. In the dozens of Fosdicks whose names appear in the parish records of Suffolk County in the 16th and 17th centuries, I did not find any with the name Stephen, except the Stephen of Semer, mentioned in the footnote on page 8.



penmanship, and in later days in Massachusetts, as we shall see, his reading habits got him into trouble with the Puritan church.

When Stephen was born, Shakespeare was nineteen years old and Queen Elizabeth had been on the throne for twenty-five years. Stephen was twenty years old when the great queen died. He was brought up in the adventurous days that characterized her era. The battle of the Spanish Armada was fought when he was five years old and he must have heard it discussed many a time around the family hearth. That he travelled beyond the limits of his county—a circumstance somewhat unusual in those days—is indicated by his marriage to Sarah Wetherell, who apparently came from Maidstone, Kent. It is not at all improbable that he visited London. One is fascinated by the speculation whether he saw Shakespeare on the stage at the Globe Theatre. But his Puritan tradition and his humble status in the social order of his day make it seem unlikely. More probably he never even heard of Shakespeare.<sup>11</sup>

He was about fifty-two years old when he brought his family to America. Undoubtedly he experienced the hardships of the desperate economic depression that swept over the eastern counties of England in the decade preceding his emigration. If life had been easy for him, it is doubtful whether at his age and with a large family he would have faced the hazards of the trip.

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<sup>11</sup> I have received from several branches of the Fosdick family in America copies of alleged coats of arms. My belief is that they are fictitious. No two copies that I have seen have been the same, and from my research in England I am convinced that the humble origins of the family preclude the possibility of heraldic distinction.



### CHAPTER III

## THE EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

**I**N the ten years preceding Stephen Fosdick's emigration to America, Suffolk County in England lived through a period of high taxes and poverty without parallel since the Wars of the Roses. Distress was everywhere, particularly among the lower and middle classes. There was constant threat of war with Spain and the seaboard was in a state of continual alarm. Men were pressed for service in the training bands and "many fled through the county and were concealed by the inhabitants from the King's officers."<sup>1</sup> By 1634 the finances and the economic life of the county were in a state of complete chaos.

To this unhappy situation the irksome ecclesiastical restraints of Archbishop Laud added anger and hopelessness. As the history of Suffolk expresses it: "The sacredness of individual religion as the men of Suffolk found it in the gospels and in the sermons and prayers of their powerful preacher, Dr. Samuel Ward (of Ipswich), was to them more precious than their homes."<sup>2</sup> In October 1634, therefore, nearly 600 of the inhabitants of Suffolk decided to emigrate to America, where John Winthrop's company had preceded them four years earlier. Stephen Fosdick was probably one of this large group.

But Stephen was doubtless influenced in his decision by more intimate associations. The minister of the church at Great Wenham was the Reverend James Hopkins, a friend of John Winthrop who was now the Governor of the Colony in New England. A letter which Hopkins wrote to Winthrop has been preserved. Dated from Great Wenham, February 25, 1632-33, it says in part:

I promise myselfe much of this plantation, for I cannot thinke but God will honour them that are soe carefull to honour him. . . . If I can not enjoyce my libertie upon God's tearmes as I have done, I have a purpose to make myselfe a member of your plantation and when I come I hope I shall not come alone. . . . Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> *Victoria History of Suffolk*, Vol. I, pp. 187 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Gurdon of my towne and his wife remember their love to you and to Mrs. Winthropp. My selfe and wife remember our service and respect to you both alsoe.<sup>3</sup>

It seems probable that Stephen's decision to emigrate was strongly influenced not only by the attitude of the minister of the church, but by people like the Gurdons with whom, in the small hamlet of Great Wenham, he must have been intimately acquainted. For example, in the Edward Vince will, above referred to, in which money for a Bible was left to Stephen's daughter Hannah, a bequest of 20s. was made to James Hopkins, "Preacher of the Word of God in Great Wenham." It is not unlikely that Stephen's reception in the Massachusetts colony and the excellent start that he made there were due, in part at least, to his connections with the Great Wenham friends of Governor Winthrop.

As we have seen, Stephen crossed the ocean twice, the first time in 1635. It is not known whether his family accompanied him on his first or second trip. It was not unusual for an emigrant to return for members of his family after he had established himself in the colony. We know, for example, that the Reverend John Wilson, preacher at Sudbury in Suffolk, about twenty miles from Great Wenham, came back in 1631 to fetch his hesitant wife. Wilson was a friend of James Hopkins, and Stephen had undoubtedly heard of this incident.<sup>4</sup>

In 1635 Stephen, as we have said, was about 52 years old. His wife Sarah was 46, and he had a family of eight children: Hannah, aged 20; Thomas, 18; Martha, 17; Samuel, 16; two whose names and ages we do not know; John, 9; and Mary, 5. The first six children were by his first wife, Anna Harre. Sarah Wetherell, his second wife, was the mother of his children John and Mary. It was from this boy John, nine years old when he crossed the Atlantic, that most if not all of the Fosdicks in America today are descended.

We do not know the name of the ship on which Stephen arrived in this country on either of his trips. If he brought his

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<sup>3</sup> Winthrop Papers, Mass. Historical Society, Vol. III, p. 105. Hopkins himself did not emigrate. He died December 1634. "Mr. Gurdon" appears to have been John Gurdon, half brother of Muriel Saltonstall, who with her husband, Sir Richard Saltonstall, came to New England in 1635. The parents of John Gurdon's wife, née Parker, lived in Great Wenham. (*Waters' Genealogical Gleanings*, Vol. II, pp. 954, 955.)

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins refers to Wilson in his letter to Winthrop, *op. cit.*



family with him in 1635, it is possible that they came on the "Hercules" (John Witherley, Master), which sailed from Sandwich in Kent in the spring of that year and arrived in Boston probably in June. William Wetherell and his family, of Maidstone, Kent, were on this ship, and the fact that Stephen's wife, Sarah Wetherell, is supposed to have come from Maidstone lends credence to the suggestion that the combined families may have come together.<sup>5</sup> However, we cannot be certain. Scores of ships left the other side during the period of emigration, sailing from all the ports of England, and in relation to most of them no passenger lists are now extant. In 1635—the year that Stephen arrived—Governor Winthrop wrote in his *Journal*: "In June of this year there arrived here fourteen great ships and one at Salem."<sup>6</sup> The passenger lists of all these ships are missing.

Generally speaking, the voyage from England to Massachusetts took from ten weeks to three months. From our point of view the boats were very small, often ranging as low as 100 tons and probably never in excess of 400 tons. A 400-ton ship might bring as many as 200 to 300 passengers. For this long voyage food and drink<sup>7</sup> had to be carried as part of the cargo, and without refrigeration of any kind the meat was transported in the form of chickens, pigs, and live stock on the hoof, packed in with the passengers. "It may be left to speculation how the sanitary needs of the passengers were provided for in ordinary weather with smooth seas," says Banks in his *Planters of the Commonwealth*. "The imagination is beggared to know how the requirements of nature were met in prolonged storms when men, women and children were kept under the hatches for safety." Needless to say, the mortality rates on these incoming ships were extremely high. It was at best a hazardous adventure.

Although we have no definite information about Stephen's two children whose names are unknown, the rest of the family

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<sup>5</sup> The relationship of William and Sarah has not yet been established. They may have been brother and sister. He was not her father as stated in Newhall's *The Record of My Ancestry*, because he was married in 1627 when he was 25 years old, and Sarah married Stephen in 1624. A passenger list of the "Hercules," containing 96 names, is printed in Banks' *Planters of the Commonwealth* (p. 114). Stephen Fosdick's name is not included, but the list is probably not complete.

<sup>6</sup> *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> Water could not be kept fresh, and beer, cider, and spirits were the only drink on these voyages.

apparently arrived safely. Whether Stephen came with the expectation of settling in Charlestown, or whether his settlement there was a matter of chance, we do not know. Frequently neighbors from the same town or village in England came together on the same ship and settled together in the same locality here. Often they gave to their new communities in the wilderness the names of the towns which they had left in England, and New England today is dotted with names that betoken the affection which the new settlers had for their old homes. In this long catalogue of names Suffolk County is well represented—Ipswich, Stoneham, Clopton, Orford, etc. In this list of names it is significant that Wenham appears—Wenham, Massachusetts, twenty miles north of Boston, founded in 1639. It is not unlikely that some of Stephen's neighbors settled there, nor is it unlikely that Stephen's choice of Charlestown as his home was dictated, in part at least, by the fact that he was acquainted with some of the settlers who had already arrived.

The first record that relates to the Fosdick family in America is found in the Town Records of Charlestown dated July 11, 1635.<sup>8</sup> With its quaint spelling and phrasing it follows:

	{ 1635 v <sup>th</sup> month, 11 <sup>th</sup> day
	{ Stephen ffosdick was yielded to have
Stephen ffosdick	{ ye houseplott next Good Convers his new
	{ house upon condition to build A
	{ good house upon it, and to pay good
	{ Richeson A daies worke.

Under the land ownership system that prevailed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony at this time, land was not sold to the settlers but was given to them, provided they were reputable persons who were approved by the general town meeting. All that the settlers paid was the legal recording fee. Obviously, therefore, Stephen proved acceptable to his fellow-townsmen. But the lot—the “houseplott”—that was given to him appears to have been among the better properties in the settlement. It was located on Sconce Point facing southeast on the harbor, and Goodman Convers, his next-door neighbor, was a member of the Board of Selectmen, as was Richeson for whom he was to do a “daies worke.” Perhaps the fact that Stephen was a carpenter and that carpenters were in demand played a part in his

<sup>8</sup> Prior to 1752, March was reckoned as the first month. Hence “Vth month” was July.



welcome to Charlestown.<sup>9</sup> Undoubtedly Stephen's connections in Great Wenham were helpful. But the admission of newcomers to the settlement was strictly watched, and the indications are that in terms of antecedents and character the Fosdick family was regarded as a desirable accession to the colony.

This impression is strengthened by the fact that three years later Stephen and his wife were admitted to the church in full communion, and a few months afterward (September 7, 1638) he was made a "freeman" by the General Court. That is, he was given the right to vote in colony affairs. During this three-year period he had, as we have seen, returned to England; how long he was absent from the colony we do not know. It is significant that no mention of him or of his family appears in the colony records between 1635 and 1638. By 1638, as is indicated by his ecclesiastical and civic standing, he was well established in his new home.

Church membership in the Massachusetts colony was by no means an easy or expeditious process. The church was a rigid oligarchy and admission not only was jealously guarded but was reserved for those whose doctrine and belief had been tested by time as well as by examination. To become a freeman involved even stricter tests. To qualify for this position a citizen had to show: first, that he was a member of the Puritan church in good standing; second, that he was industrious and law-abiding; and third, that he was worth, in property or money, at least £200, or that he had an income which an invested £200 would bring him. A freeman had the title "Mister," while a common person without the franchise was called "Goodman." It is significant that as late as 1670, when the population of Massachusetts was around 25,000, there were only 1,100 who were classed as having the right to vote.

Stephen's prominence in Charlestown is indicated in other ways. In 1638 an allotment of land was made to the inhabitants of the town in accordance with their standing in the community. There were 110 individual allotments, the largest going to "Geo. Buncker." "Stephen fforsditch" got 20 acres on Mistick side and 40 acres "above the Ponds." Twenty-one citizens received more than Stephen, seven received the same, and

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<sup>9</sup> On December 12, 1634, Governor Winthrop wrote his son in England listing a carpenter as among the necessities in the colony. (Winthrop Papers, Vol. III, p. 178.)



eighty-two received less.<sup>10</sup> Obviously Stephen held a substantial place in the community within three years of his landing in 1635; and this despite the fact that he had been absent from the colony for at least a year during his trip back to England.

In this same year, 1638, a property census was taken of the holdings of the inhabitants of Charlestown and the following record shows what Stephen possessed:<sup>11</sup>

1638. The Possession of Steeven fforsdick within Charlestowne limites.

One dwelling house with a garden plott, scituate at sconce pointe, butting southeast upon the harbour, bounded on the northeast by Henry Larrance, on the west by James Garrett, and on the north by Tho. Moulton.

2. Two acres of meadow by estimation, more or lesse, scituate in the high feilde marsh.

3. Commones for two milch cowes.

4. Seaven acres of earable land and meadow by estimation, more or lesse, scituate in the line feilde, butting northeast upon mistick river, southeast upon the bridgeway, bounded on the west by a high way, and on the east by Rob. Long, a highway also at the end betwixt the upland and the meadow.

5. Haulfe an acre of meadow by estimation more or lesse, lying in mistick marshes, butting west upon the north river, east upon the woodland, bounded on the south by Mr Palgrave and on the north by Tho. Lynde.

6. Twentie acres of woodland by estimation, more or lesse, scituate in mistick feilde, butting south upon Mr Nowells ferme, north upon the comon, bounded on the east by ffaintnot Wines, on the west by Michael Bastow, and the comon.

7. ffortie acres of land by estimation, more or lesse, scituate in west rockfeilde.

Just where Stephen Fosdick's property was located in relation to the city of Charlestown as it exists today is difficult to determine. Sconce Point where his house stood—the same house which in his will he left to his grandson Samuel “to run in the generations of the Fosdicks forever”—is now part of the Charlestown Navy Yard,<sup>12</sup> and it is impossible to determine its site. However, Judge Frederick W. Fosdick, of Boston, succeeded in locating the seven-acre plot mentioned in Item 4 of the above

<sup>10</sup> Charlestown Archives, Vol. XX, p. 66. Citation supplied by Judge Fosdick.

<sup>11</sup> *Third Report of the Record Commissioners of Charlestown, 1638-1802*, City of Boston, Document 39, 1878, p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Frothingham, *History of Charlestown* (1845), p. 93.

property census. His interesting note, dated May 17, 1931, follows:

It (the plot) lies in what is now Arlington but was then Charlestown, and is the land south-easterly of Medford Street in Arlington, abutting thereon ever since before 1638, in which year this land is stated to belong to Stephen Fosdick (Steeven fforsdick) by Charlestown Land Records. This land had its north-easterly boundary on a highway which was on the bank of the Mystic River and which is now the Mystic Valley Parkway. Any descendant of Stephen who is curious to see it can easily do so. Medford Street runs from Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington easterly from a point about one hundred yards south (toward Cambridge) from the railroad crossing at Arlington Center. Turn into Medford Street and drive along until you come upon a down grade at a right curve just before reaching the intersection of the Boulevard. The land in the corner at your right was once Stephen Fosdick's.

It is interesting to record the fact that on October 2, 1654, Stephen Fosdick conveyed the seven-acre piece of property just described to Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard College. Eighteen other owners of land in this area conveyed their property to President Dunster at the same time.<sup>13</sup> In each case the deeds were made out to "Henry Dunster, President of the Coll." Charles Fosdick, of Fitchburg, in his research into this transaction came to the conclusion that it represented a gift to Harvard College, but this does not seem to have been the case. A letter which I received from the Custodian of the Harvard University Archives states that "these parcels were sold outright to Henry Dunster as a private individual who thus built up a compact farm of 714 acres . . . probably most of it pasture."<sup>14</sup> In his deed Stephen described his property as "arable and meadow" and signed his name as "Steven ffosdicke." In his will nine years later he spelled his name "Steeven." Earlier he had written it "Stephen." Consistency was not a characteristic of Elizabethan spelling.

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<sup>13</sup> What was originally known in 1638 as "the line field" was called in these deeds of 1654 "the Menatomie field." See Middlesex County Southern District Registry of Deeds at Cambridge, Book I, p. 105.

<sup>14</sup> Letter signed by Clifford K. Shipton, dated September 6, 1944.



## CHAPTER IV

### STEPHEN FOSDICK'S LIFE IN CHARLESTOWN

IN his book on the Fosdick family Lewis Fosdick assembled such facts about Stephen's life in Charlestown as were available. Thus we know that Stephen served on a jury in a murder case in 1639 and that he was elected one of three "Surveyors for ye Highwaies" in 1640. In 1639 he and four of his neighbors were given permission by the authorities to build a dock or quay "as farre out as they will." Like all true Englishmen Stephen believed in fighting for his rights as the following court record shows :

Thomas Trigs  
fined

Thomas Trigs, being convicted of stealing foure wedges of iron from Stephen ffosdicke, by him confessed in open court, ye said ffosdicke haveing againe received his wedges, The Court doth order y<sup>t</sup> the s<sup>d</sup> Trigs shall pay unto the said Stephen ffosdicke, twenty shill. more, & costs of Court seaven shill. & sixpence.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently Stephen lived the same kind of life that all the other settlers did. He shared from time to time in the allotment of town lands and supported himself by his farming, his fishing, and his carpentry. There was little or no money because it was illegal to send currency from England to the colonies; consequently commodities and labor were a subject of barter. Stephen's house on Sconce Point, built not of logs—for there were no log houses in the English colonies at this time—but of rough boards, doubtless resembled the houses of his neighbors: two story, unpainted box-like structures, without porches or stoops, the second story projecting over the first. It was the architecture which had been brought from East Anglia,

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<sup>1</sup> County Court held at Cambridge April 5, 1659. From County Court Records (Middlesex County, East Cambridge), Vol. I, p. 12. This record was discovered by Judge Frederick W. Fosdick.

and Stephen, as a carpenter, probably knew no other kind of house to build.<sup>2</sup> Fifteen years after Stephen's arrival a traveller left this description of Charlestown:

It hath a large market-place near the water side built round with houses, comely and fair, forth of which there issue two streets orderly built with some very fair houses, beautified with pleasant gardens and orchards. The whole town consists in its extent of about 150 dwelling houses. Their meeting-house for Sabbath assembly stands in the market-place, very comely built and large.<sup>3</sup>

The interior of our forefathers' houses was exceedingly plain. Furniture was homemade. Chairs were not in general use and stools took their place. The walls of the rooms were usually bare. There was no pottery or chinaware, and only the well-to-do possessed pewter dishes and drinking cups. Wooden trenchers took the place of plates, and drinking was done out of leather tankards. There were no forks in use at the table, for while forks had been introduced from Italy into Elizabethan England, they were regarded by most people as an affectation. The beds were plain wooden frames with tall posts at the corners. They had no springs; cords or ropes were stretched across them in a sort of network and a hay-filled mattress was laid over the cords. Thick curtains surrounded the beds, not for privacy but to keep out the drafts.

Candles were high in price, owing to a lack of tallow to make them. Most people did not use them—or did so very rarely. Instead they lighted their houses with fat splinters of pine or with dried reeds soaked in melted fat. Clothes were expensive and were made to last for years. Fashions changed so slowly that a woman might wear the same dress for the greater part of her life.

Our forefathers were heavy eaters—consuming a vast quantity of meat, game, and fish, together with corn and beans. Their customary household beverage was beer or cider. Tea and coffee, of course, had not been introduced. Few people drank milk, and water was regarded with deep suspicion, both in England and in the colonies—probably with just reason. Stephen and his neighbors knew nothing of sanitation in the modern

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<sup>2</sup> We know from the law suit in the Court of Requests (mentioned earlier) that this was the kind of house that Stephen helped to build in Dedham, Essex.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson quoted in Frothingham, *op cit.*, p. 118.



sense, and the water of wells and springs was probably often contaminated. Beer or cider was given to small children with their meals, and they drank it between meals when they were thirsty.

This prejudice against water extended even to bathing. Our forefathers did not take baths. The fanciful medical lore of the 17th Century ascribed many human ailments to contact with water, and washing with water was limited to the hands and face.<sup>4</sup>

From our point of view the everyday life of Stephen and his family would seem inexpressibly crude. Moreover, the rigid theocratic government under which he lived would, to our generation, be intolerable. Colonial legislation, at this period, touched the citizens at every conceivable point. No freemen were allowed to entertain a stranger in their own houses without giving notice at the next town meeting; and "none that are not free shall entertain any without the consent of three of the selectmen." If citizens took tobacco publicly, "or privately in their houses before acquaintances or strangers," the penalty was 2s. 6d. If they sold certain goods for more than four pence in a shilling profit, they were fined. Women could not wear short sleeves, and it was illegal for "lace to be worn upon any garment or linnen." The list of acts forbidden was interminable, and the laws were rigidly enforced. If citizens criticized the government they were liable to be fined, set in the stocks, or disfranchised. The pillory, the whipping post, and the bilboes were the instruments of coercion, and they were employed to enforce conformity and regulate the lives of the people. A visitor to Charlestown in 1638 mentions the strict surveillance to which those entering the Tavern or "Ordinary" were subjected. "If a stranger went in, he was presently followed by one appointed to that office, who would thrust himself into his company uninvited, and if he called for more drink than the officer thought in his judgment he could soberly bear away, he would presently countermand it, and appoint the proportion beyond which he could not get one drop."<sup>5</sup>

But these restrictions were part of the environment of the 17th century, and to Stephen and his contemporaries they prob-

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<sup>4</sup> An interesting description of the life of our colonial forefathers can be found in W. E. Woodward, *The Way Our People Lived* (1944). See also Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *The Puritan Oligarchy* (1947).

<sup>5</sup> Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

ably seemed natural enough. Had it not been for a disaster in 1643 which practically wrecked his life, Stephen undoubtedly would have finished out his years in increasing comfort and stability.

The disaster was his excommunication from the Puritan church. This excommunication had to do with the so-called Baptist heresy which was sweeping the colony at the time. The increase of Baptist sympathizers had caused great alarm throughout the settlements, in part due to the excesses of the Baptist reformers in Munster, Holland, and in part to the theological heresy involved in their condemnation of infant baptism. The colony law on this subject, rushed through to meet the emergency, read as follows:

If any person within this jurisdiction shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptism of infants, or shall go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance, or shall appear to the Court wilfully or obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, every such person shall be sentenced to banishment.<sup>6</sup>

Stephen Fosdick's crime was less than this. What he apparently did was to read some Baptist books. There is no evidence that he ever claimed to be a Baptist. All that he appears to have done was to contaminate himself by reading Baptist literature, and perhaps he was not too courteous to the church officials when he was accused of his heresy. However, the exact nature of the offense we do not know, as the church records are silent on the point, but on May 7, 1643, he was excommunicated and fined £20—a savage fine, considering the lack of ready money in the colony.<sup>7</sup>

Excommunication carried with it serious consequences. It involved a certain degree of social ostracism; members of the church were enjoined not to eat or drink with excommunicates. It meant, too, that Stephen lost his title as "freeman." He could no longer vote nor hold office, and his inability to pay his fine threw his property on Sconce Point into the hands

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<sup>6</sup> Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 132. Reverend Thomas Allen was the pastor of the church at Charlestown when Stephen was excommunicated and seems to have had considerable responsibility for stirring up the trouble. He continued in his pastorate until 1651, when he was dismissed and returned to England. Justin Winsor, *The Memorial History of Boston* (1882), Vol. I, p. 396. Citation by Judge Fosdick.



of the sheriff. Stephen was perhaps evicted from his house, because four years later, in 1647, he submitted a petition to the court, setting forth that his house had been burnt while it was in the sheriff's hands, and that inasmuch as it was worth £15 he prayed that he might be released of the £20 fine by paying £5. This petition was granted at a session of the General Court held in Boston, May 10, 1648. The record appears as follows:

Stephen Forsdicke, beinge fined for his miscariage, by this Court, twenty pounds, upon his pet[ition], & the reasons therein alleaged, his said fine is abated to five pounds, which being well satisfied, his land is discharged accordinge to his desire.<sup>8</sup>

However, Stephen's membership in the church was not restored until 1664, three months before he died, and during all this period of twenty-one years he suffered the disabilities attached to those who did not belong to the Puritan establishment. Even at the time of his death he does not seem to have been living in his house on Sconce Point, which apparently had been rebuilt. In his will, dated February 23, 1663, he speaks of "the four roomes, one over another which we [his wife and himself] do now make use of"; and refers to "the house and barne" on Sconce Point, which he leaves to his grandson Samuel, as if they were apart from his own residence. Whether this situation was related to the penalties imposed by the church we do not know.

His restoration to the church was the result of a confession on his part which in the light of what he had suffered seems a bit abject. However, we do not know the pressures to which he was subjected nor the relationship which his restoration may have borne to his tangible property and to his capacity to convey it by will to his heirs.

Stephen's confession, as recorded in the church records, is as follows:

The Covenant of the church being (for the summe of it) a sol-  
emne promise or engagement to walk with God, and with his  
people according to the word of God, I do now heartily approve  
of it, and close with it, and am sorry that I have at any time  
spoken against it: Having neglected likewise to hear the church  
in their dealings with me for my offence, I doe unfainedly repent  
thereof, and desire God and his people to forgive me.

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<sup>8</sup> Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Vol. III, p. 139.



The church record then goes on to state the action taken as a result of this confession:

This was read to the church, accepted by all as satisfactory; he was (the brethren consenting) received to that state of communion which he had before his excommunication; and by the sentence of the Eldership declared to be soe restored.<sup>9</sup>

Stephen Fosdick's excommunication has become something of a *cause célèbre* in the history of the Massachusetts colony. It is mentioned in many of the documents and evidently created something of a sensation in its day. However, it is obvious that, compared with the treatment of Baptists generally by the Massachusetts colony, Stephen got off very lightly. Many were banished or flogged. The theocracy of New England was not founded on any conception of tolerance. "It doth not a little grieve my spirit," wrote Saltonstall in England to Cotton in Massachusetts, "what sadd things are reported dayly of your tyranny and persecution." And he went on to warn him "not to practice those courses in a wilderness which you went so farre to prevent." And Sir George Downing in a letter retailing English opinion of the colony about the treatment of Baptists speaks of "that law of banishing for conscience which makes us stinke everywhere."<sup>10</sup>

Stephen's life, toward the end, was further saddened by the death of his two oldest sons. In 1649, Samuel, who had been sixteen years old when they crossed the Atlantic, died at the age of thirty, while on a trip to Barbados serving as a carpenter on the ship "Fortune." He apparently was unmarried and died without issue.<sup>11</sup> A year later, in 1650, Thomas, Stephen's oldest son, died at the age of thirty-three. He had married a girl called Damaris (last name missing) and had two children who are mentioned in their grandfather's will, although their

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<sup>9</sup> *Record Book of the First Church in Charlestown* in the New England Historic Genealogical Society of Boston.

<sup>10</sup> James Truslow Adams, *The Founding of New England* (1921), pp. 173 and 261.

<sup>11</sup> His wages due were reckoned at £15 3s. 4d., and Stephen Fosdick retained Nicholas Shapley as his attorney to collect them. A law suit followed and the wages were recovered. (County Court Records [Cambridge], 1649-1663, Vol. I, p. 61.) Samuel had made a will giving all his property to his sister. (Information contained in papers of Charles Fosdick and Judge Frederick W. Fosdick.)

sex is not known.<sup>12</sup> Omitting the two unknown children of Stephen,<sup>13</sup> John was thus the only son left to carry on the Fosdick name in America.

Stephen Fosdick died May 21, 1664, aged 81. Although there is no available record of it, he was undoubtedly buried in the Old Burying Ground in Charlestown, about three-quarters of a mile up the Charles River from Sconce Point. Indeed, this was the only cemetery in use at that time in Charlestown, and we know that Stephen's neighbor, George Bunker, owner of Bunker's Hill, who died the same year that Stephen did, was buried in the Old Burying Ground. John Harvard, who gave his name to Harvard College and who had died 26 years earlier, had also been buried there.

Today the Old Burying Ground is known as the Phipps Street Burying Ground. One of the quaintest of Boston's old cemeteries, it is owned and maintained by the city; and many of its gravestones go back to the early days of the settlement. Stephen's gravestone—if he had one—has long since disappeared. Frothingham, writing his history of Charlestown in 1845, makes this comment on the Old Burying Ground:

Time has dealt severely with Charlestown. The monuments of its graveyard, its records, and its silent highways are its only antiquities. The conflagration of 1775<sup>14</sup> spared not a dwelling place; and living witnesses testify that the temporary possessors of the town [the British regiments] did not even respect this venerable sanctuary of the dead; they used its gravestones for the thresholds of the barracks of their soldiers on Bunker Hill.<sup>15</sup>

Stephen left an estate inventoried at £500, which, as Lewis Fosdick remarks, was "riches." Most of it was in land which had come to him by allotment or purchase and which, with the development of the colony, had greatly enhanced in value. Stephen's will in all its quaint terminology is printed in full in Lewis Fosdick's book. His sole surviving son, John,

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas left an estate of £68 11s. The court ordered that the estate should be divided "twenty pounds a peec to each of his children, and the remainder to his relect widow." (County Court Records [Cambridge], Vol. I, p. 14.) Two years later Damaris married James Hadlock and moved to Wenham. (Wyman, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 452.)

<sup>13</sup> Lewis Fosdick mentions one of the unknown children as "probably Sarah." but gives no authority for his statement.

<sup>14</sup> Charlestown was burned by the British in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

<sup>15</sup> Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 94.



was named executor. The will made particularized provision for Stephen's widow, Sarah Wetherell, even to the household articles she was to have—"the bed wee now ly on," "the little kettle and the pott and the great kettle"—and also "a cow and a cow common to keep the cow on"; "and I order my executrix to winter this cow for my wife yearly during her life . . . this cow to be divided among my grandchildren . . . after my wives decease." But Sarah, his widow, was apparently not satisfied. Some weeks after Stephen's death, through her brother John Wetherell, she presented a petition to the court asking for relief. The nature of the request we do not know, as the petition has been lost, but an abstract of the court record, made at the time, reads as follows:

Petition of John Witherall cons<sup>g</sup> the death of his loving brother Stephen Fosdick who hath left behind an aged, infirm crasie wife being about the age of seventy five (75) yrs lame of her feet going with crutches—had been his wife neer forty yeers married to him in a single state—upon her marriage with him had six of his children to take care of.<sup>16</sup>

Whatever the nature of the petition, Sarah's son, John Fosdick, as executor of his father's estate, apparently opposed it, and it was dismissed by the court with the terse words: "find for defts" (defendants).

As we have seen, Sarah was 46 years old when she sailed with her husband and children in their hazardous search for a new home. For nearly thirty years she had lived the hard life of a pioneer, a life that required not only endurance but high courage. If at the age of 75, feeble and broken in health, she seemed to her brother "crasie," it probably meant only that she was at last borne down by care and hardship. Much has been written about the sufferings of the Puritan fathers; too little has been said about what the Puritan mothers had to face.

We do not know how long Sarah survived her husband; there is no record of her death and no gravestone. She doubtless was buried in the Old Burying Ground beside Stephen, with the Charles River flowing quietly at the foot of the hill, and Sconce Point, her old home, almost within sight.

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<sup>16</sup> Manuscript index of the early records of Middlesex County in two volumes, prepared by Thomas Bellows Wyman, Vol. II, p. 31, from the 13th file, 1664. The petition was dated June 7, 1664. This manuscript is in the library of the New England Historic Genealogical Society.



*The Children of Stephen Fosdick\**

*By Anna Harre*

- (1) Hannah Fosdick, born 1615.
- (2) Thomas Fosdick, born 1616.
- (3) Martha Fosdick, born 1617.
- (4) Samuel Fosdick, born 1618.
- (5) Unknown.
- (6) Unknown.

*By Sarah Wetherell*

- (7) *John Fosdick*, born 1626, the next lineal ancestor.
- (8) Mary Fosdick, born 1630.

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\* For details see Appendix I.

## CHAPTER V

### JOHN FOSDICK

**J**OHN FOSDICK, the only surviving son of Stephen, was 38 years old when his father died, and he had already established himself in the colony of Charlestown. He had undoubtedly been educated in the free school which Charlestown created in 1636, the year after his father's arrival. William Wetherell, a graduate of Cambridge University, was the first schoolmaster,<sup>1</sup> and inasmuch as he may have been related to John's mother, Sarah, it is likely that John received full advantage of the instruction.

Like his father, John was a carpenter. The town records for 1675 show the following item relating to the enlargement of the meeting house:

February 1. Agreed then with John Fosdick and Nathaniel Frothingham, to provide all timber and build three galleries, one in front and one on each side of the meeting-house. . . . the town to find boards and nails, and to pay for the said work, when completely finished, forty six pounds in town pay; and if it shall appear a hard bargain, twenty shillings more.<sup>2</sup>

Even at a relatively early age John shared in the various allotments of land made to the citizens of the town. However, he did not become a "freeman" until 1690 when he was 64 years old, and was not admitted to the church until 1696 when he was 70.<sup>3</sup> But all his life he seems to have had an active part in the affairs of his community. He was appointed a "tything-man" in Charlestown in 1677, and served on a number of town committees. Evidently he spent his time between Charlestown and Malden, in both of which he owned property. He bore the title "Sergeant," doubtless related to the militia of the colony, and he is the "Sergeant Fosdick of Malden" whose

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<sup>1</sup> Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> By this time the rules requiring freemen to be members of the church had been relaxed.

name figures rather prominently in the real estate transactions of the period.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the land which he once owned is now part of the campus of Tufts College. In 1936 Richard B. Coolidge, historian of Tufts, in an address on the development of the site of the college, said: "We appear to be assembled today on land formerly of Sergeant John Fosdick."<sup>5</sup>

Like his father before him, John collided with the Puritan church and the theocratic government of which it was a part. But where Stephen's difficulty had related to a matter of church policy, John's difficulty had to do with a girl. Her name was Ann Shapley (or Shapleigh), and she was the daughter of Nicholas Shapley, an old friend and neighbor of Stephen's on Sconce Point and one of Charlestown's leading citizens.<sup>6</sup>

Human nature does not vary much from generation to generation, and after three hundred years it is probably permissible to disclose the deviations from orthodox standards on the part of our ancestors. In this particular case the dereliction might have gone without public notice, except for the fact that our Puritan forefathers seemed to find grim satisfaction in ferreting out and proclaiming the sins of their contemporaries. "The church wardens shall dailie observe the carriage and lives of the people and shall forthwith informe the ministers of all such scandalous crymes as shall be committed by any of them."<sup>7</sup> When the "cryme" of John and Ann was brought to light, the Puritan authorities showed no reticence and no mercy.

And it must be admitted that the dereliction was a bit unusual. Sometime in the year 1649, Ann Shapley, aged 22, married a man named Henry Branson (or Brainson). A child born to her some months after her marriage was, she con-

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<sup>4</sup> It is possible that this is the John Fosdick who served in Captain John Cutler's company in King Philip's War in 1676. But John would have been 50 years old at the time, and it seems more likely that it was his son John, aged 18, who was associated with Captain Cutler.

<sup>5</sup> The address is printed in the Medford Historical Register, published by the Medford Historical Society, Medford, Massachusetts, June, 1936, Vol. XXXIX. Citation supplied by Judge Fosdick.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Shapley and his wife Ann arrived in Boston in 1635, coming from Bristol. In 1646 he bought the house on Sconce Point, and his property apparently abutted that of Stephen. He had four children, Ann, and three boys. In 1662 he was elected Town Clerk of Charlestown, a position of distinction. He died in 1663. (Thomas Bellows Wyman, *Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown* (1879), p. 854.)

<sup>7</sup> James Truslow Adams, *The Founding of New England*, p. 79.



fessed, the child of John Fosdick, who at that time was 23. The circumstances surrounding this bizarre situation are lost in oblivion. All that we have today are the brutal court records: the summons to the Constable of Charlestown to apprehend John "for geting Ann Branson with child when shee was single"; the testimony of the midwife relating to Ann's confession ("She [the midwife] pressing her, being very weeke, she said Jn<sup>o</sup> ffosdic was ye father"); the summons to the Constable of Charlestown, three months later, "to warne Ann the wife of Henry Branson to appeare at the nexte Cort at Cambridge to answere for cryme comitted by her w<sup>th</sup> John ffosdick before she was married"; and finally the record in the Middlesex County Court reading as follows:

John ffosdicke and An Branson—are bound ove to ans. for there misdemean<sup>r</sup> unto the next Quarter Cort at Boston, except the Generall Court take Cogniscance of the case before, John ffosdicke bound himself in 20<sup>lb</sup>. bond for his psonall appearance, & his father Steeven ffosdicke bound himself in 20<sup>lb</sup> bond for his pformance of it.<sup>8</sup>

What happened to Ann in relation to this charge, history does not record. John and his father, Stephen, for reasons unknown to us, apparently elected not to appear at court, for the forty pounds which they had jointly posted as security was forfeited. The next record of the case appears on October 10, 1650:

In answer to the petition of Stephen Forsdich, for the remitting of his fforty pounds, forfeited for his sonne's non appearance at Boston Court, the Court thinks meete to remit him thirty five pounds, and that he pay only five pounds for his non appearance; and that his sonne be bound to appeare to answer for his faulte to the next Court of Assistants.<sup>9</sup>

And here the record stops. What punishment, if any—aside from merciless publicity—was meted out on the luckless pair there is no way of knowing. Apparently Ann continued to live with her husband, Henry Branson, and a year later, in 1651, she bore him a child, Mary Branson. At least this seems to be the only reasonable interpretation of the confused birth records

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<sup>8</sup> County Court Records (Middlesex County, East Cambridge). The first three citations are to be found in Folder 3, p. 2. The last citation is Vol. I, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Massachusetts Bay Colony Records, Vol. IV, p. 32.

of the time.<sup>10</sup> And then Henry Branson disappears from the scene. Whether he died or what became of him there is no way of knowing. But at this juncture John stepped into the picture again, and this time he married his Ann, who became the mother of nine of his children, in addition to the first child, James, that had been the cause of so much sorrow.<sup>11</sup> One of these nine children was Samuel, from whom most of the American family is descended.

Apparently this connubial irregularity did not affect the relations between the Fosdicks and the Shapleys, for it was only a few months after the scandal developed that Stephen retained Shapley to sue for the wages of his deceased son Samuel; and when Shapley died in 1663, he mentioned John in his will and left him £20.<sup>12</sup> However, the irregularity was probably not without some consequences. As we have already seen, John was not admitted to the church until he was 70 years old, and there is no record that his wife, Ann, was ever admitted. Moreover, John and Ann seem to have left Charlestown and settled for a number of years in nearby Malden, across the Mystic River. This does not necessarily imply that public opinion in Charlestown was unsympathetic; as a matter of fact, John had extensive holdings in Malden, and it is possible that he had begun to develop them prior to 1650. But it apparently was many years before he returned to Charlestown to make it his regular residence. Why this was so we do not know, but it is possible to surmise that John and Ann preferred to live in a new community where an event which had apparently rocked the colony could more easily be forgotten.

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<sup>10</sup> Lewis Fosdick followed Savage and Wyman in ascribing this second child, Mary, to John Fosdick. But the Massachusetts County Records (p. 140, Charlestown births) make no reference to Mary Fosdick, but do mention a Mary Branson, "daughter of Branson and Anna his wife," although the dates are obviously confused. The Charlestown Church Records (p. 238) under date of April 15, 1677, record the baptism of John's and Ann's children, but make no mention of Mary Fosdick. They do, however, record the baptism on the same day of Mary Branson, "ye daughter-in-law of Jno Fosdick." The term "daughter-in-law" was frequently used for stepdaughter in the 17th century. This Mary Branson subsequently married Thomas Ashley. Incidentally she was admitted to the church, "but not to Lord's Supper." (Wyman, *op. cit.*, p. 117.)

<sup>11</sup> The date of the marriage is not of record. Anna, their first child after their marriage, was born September 26, 1653; so their marriage apparently occurred in 1652, or perhaps in the latter part of 1651.

<sup>12</sup> Wyman, *op. cit.*, p. 854.



## THE LATER LIFE OF JOHN FOSDICK

JOHN'S wife, Ann, died October 15, 1679, aged 52, and was buried in the Old Burying Ground. Some time later—just when we do not know—John was married again—this time to Elizabeth Betts, widow of John Betts.<sup>1</sup> She was John Fosdick's junior by thirty years. In 1692 this second wife, who at the moment was apparently with her husband at Malden, was indicted for witchcraft by the Court at Salem. She was 36 years old at the time. It is too often supposed that the sufferers in the witchcraft delusion were generally of the inferior classes of society. This was not true in New England. On the contrary, the victims belonged for the most part to families in the better circumstances of life, and many of them were of high social standing.

As far as the action against Elizabeth Fosdick is concerned, the incredible story is told in the yellowing records of the archives in the Salem Court House. First was the complaint, in handwriting today almost indecipherable:

Salem, May the 30<sup>th</sup> 1692.

L<sup>t</sup> Nathaniell Putnam and Joseph Whipple of Salem Village made complaint in behalfe of their Majesties against Elizabeth ffosdick of Maulden, the wife of John ffosdick, carpenter, and Elizabeth Paine of Charlstown, the wife of Stephen Paine of said place, husbandman, for sundry acts of Witchcraft by them committed lately on the bodys of Marcy Lewis and Mary Warren of Salem Village or farmes to their great hurt. . . .

The magistrates took formal note of the complaint on the same day that it was made, and three days later added this charge:

Peter Tufts of Charlstowne also appeared before us Salem June 2<sup>d</sup> 1692 and also complained against both ye above said for acts of Witchcraft committed on his negro woman.

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<sup>1</sup> They had one child, Sarah, who was born in 1687. She married Daniel Newhall, and there was a long litigation relating to her share of her father's estate. Lewis Fosdick erroneously described her as a child of John's first wife. Charles Fosdick's papers cover this point.



On June 2, 1692, therefore, the warrant for the arrest of Elizabeth Fosdick and Elizabeth Paine was issued by the magistrates. It reads as follows:

To the Marshall or Sheriff of the County of Middlesex, or deputy.

You are in their Majesties names hereby required to apprehend and bring before us at Salem forthwith or as soon as may be: Elizabeth ffosdick, the wife of John ffosdick of Maulden, carpenter, and Elizabeth Paine, the wife of Stephen Paine of Charlestowne, husbandman . . . Faile not. . . .

The final record is the return of the deputy marshal, Samuel Gibson of Cambridge:

June 2, 1692. I have apprehended the above named Elizabeth Paine and delivered her unto the sheriff of the County of Essex att Salem in ye County afore said in order to her examination, and waite in expectation of the above said Elizabeth Fosdick by mee.

June 3, 92. I have allso apprehended the body of Elizabeth ffosdick of Mauldin and delivred har to the above said Sheriff of Essex. <sup>2</sup>

There the record stops and no further information is available. Careful search in Salem, Boston, Charlestown, and Malden has failed to reveal any additional facts. Whether the indictment against Elizabeth Fosdick was dismissed or whether she was tried and acquitted or what disposition was made of the case we do not know. Many defendants were of course hanged, and the fact that Elizabeth survived for 24 years after this event shows that she at least escaped this fate.<sup>3</sup> But the ordeal must have left its cruel mark; and one can imagine that again and again in her tortured dreams she heard the passion of the crowd beating against the bars of her prison, as Cotton Mather on his white horse rode under the gallows and exhorted the spectators to protect "the rightfulness of God against the monstrous powers of Satan." The feeling against witchcraft rose to such a frenzy that those accused of the crime were treated with the greatest brutality. They were kept heavily chained,

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<sup>2</sup> Essex County Archives, Salem—Witchcraft, Vol. II, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Paine also escaped the gallows. The record shows that her husband died in 1693 and that she married again shortly afterward. See Wyman, *op. cit.*, p. 721.

and even when finally acquitted, or their indictments dismissed, they were compelled to pay the costs of the court proceedings, the expenses of living in jail and the jailer's fee of fifty dollars.

One of the incredible aspects of the situation was that Marcy Lewis and Mary Warren of Salem Village who made the original complaint against Elizabeth Fosdick were domestic servants, aged 17 and 20 respectively. Neither could read or write, but their hysterical testimony helped to send more than one victim to the gallows. Peter Tufts of Charlestown, the supplementary complainant, was so illiterate that he could not write his own name. He signed his charge against Elizabeth Fosdick and Elizabeth Paine by making his mark. On such pathetic credulity was the witchcraft persecution based.<sup>4</sup>

John Fosdick's family had other difficulties with the court. In 1671 the following reference appears in the County Court Records of Cambridge relating to John's oldest child, James, whose birth, as we have seen, had already attracted the attention of the authorities:

James fosdicke is ordered to give 5<sup>lb</sup> bond, with suretys for his appearance at next court to answ<sup>r</sup> for his rudeness in y<sup>e</sup> night season about widow Hills house.<sup>5</sup>

James was twenty-two years old at the time. What the Court actually did about this indictment appears in the following record two months later:

James fosdicke appearing before the Court to answer the p<sup>e</sup>sentment of the grand jury for rude cariage with some others in the night time, at Nanldon, & for contempt, is fined Ten Shill: & to pay costs.<sup>6</sup>

Apparently boys were boys and young men were young men even in Puritan days.

John Fosdick died September 17, 1716, at the ripe age of 90. We can picture the old patriarch living at his father's house on Sconce Point in which he had a life interest. Like his father before him, his last years were saddened by the death of his two oldest sons: James, who was drowned in 1695, and Samuel, who died in 1700 at the age of 45 at the height of a bril-

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<sup>4</sup> For general details of the witchcraft persecution see Upham's *History of Witchcraft and Salem Village*. (1867, 2 vols.)

<sup>5</sup> County Court Records (Cambridge), Vol. III (1671-1680), p. 6 (Oct. 4, 1671).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13 (Dec. 19, 1671). Judge Fosdick supplied the citation.



liant and promising career in New London, Connecticut. John outlived at least five of his ten children. His wife, Elizabeth, who had stood in irons before the magistrates of Salem 24 years before, survived him only ten days, dying at the age of 60.

John was buried in the Old Burying Ground in Charlestown, where his father had preceeded him 52 years before. His sturdy gravestone survives to this day bearing the following inscription:

Here Lyes buried  
The Body of  
Mr. John Fosdick  
Aged 90 years  
Who Deceased  
September ye 17, 1716.

Beside him lies his first wife, called "Anna" on the headstone—the Ann Shapley of his youth. His second wife, Elizabeth, was probably buried in the same plot, but the gravestone has disappeared.<sup>7</sup> John lies in his grave surrounded by the graves of his children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.<sup>8</sup>

Fifty-nine years after his death, and one hundred and eleven years after his father died, their sleep in this quiet burying ground was disturbed by cannonballs fired from British ships lying nearby in the Charles River—cannonballs that screamed over their graves and plunged into the American trenches on Bunker Hill. One of the gravestones near John's has a hole in it made by a British shell—a relic of the bombardment. But those shells ceased their screaming over 175 years ago, and today Stephen and John and their descendants rest in the shadow of Bunker Hill Monument.

<sup>7</sup> Wyman in 1879 noted the existence of her gravestone. *Op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>8</sup> In 1944 I identified in the Old Burying Ground the gravestones of John's daughter, Anna Fosdick Blunt; his daughter-in-law, Mary, wife of his son Thomas; two infant daughters of Thomas and Mary, Anna and Elizabeth; a granddaughter, Mrs. Marcy Morris, daughter of Anna Blunt; Susanna Fosdick, wife of his grandson, Samuel II; two great-great-granddaughters, Mary and Ruth, children of James, the son of Samuel II; and finally two great-great-great-granddaughters, Abigail Fosdick, daughter of David, the son of James mentioned above, and her sister Sarah Porter.

There doubtless were other Fosdicks buried in this cemetery whose headstones have disappeared. In an undated manuscript in the New England Historic Genealogical Society dealing with the gravestones in the Old Burying Ground, mention is made of stones to James Fosdick, great-grandson of John; to Elizabeth, James' wife; and to David Fosdick, their son. These three stones are no longer in existence.

John Fosdick left a fairly large estate, his personal property alone being inventoried at £123, which included "ye one eye'd mair and coalt," valued at £5. Before he died he gave by deed various parcels of his real estate to some of his sons. The settlement of his estate seems to have occasioned, or at least to have revealed, a lack of true fraternal harmony among his children. Those who had already shared in his property tried to minimize what they had received, while those who had thus far gotten nothing were loud in their protestations. Stephen, Thomas and Jonathan rushed to court and their petitions are marked by heat, bad spelling, and lack of punctuation. The following from Thomas indicates the tenor of the dispute:

Honered Sir Whare as yr oner is a bout to Seattell ye Estate of my father John ffosdick desesed & I having had Lettell all most nothing of my father Estate not ye Vallow [value] of forty shiling as ye Reste of ye Legetes Well know in Refrance to What thay have had yr humbell petishener Bagg yt yr oner Would pleas to consider him in ye parsenell Estate & Give him a Cowe or ye Vallow thare of as all ye other Legetes have had & Considerabell More Wich he can inform yr oner of if pleas to Give him ye hearing which is ye Request of your humbell petishener.<sup>9</sup>

Whether or not Thomas got the cow, history does not say. It is interesting to note that the administrator of the estate paid 5s. 5d, for "23 gallons and a 1/2 of wine att 4/6 p. ga<sup>11</sup> for ye feunerall" of John, and that they rode to the grave in "coleashes."<sup>10</sup>

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*The Children of John Fosdick\**

*By Ann Shapley*

- (1) James Fosdick, born June 17, 1649.
- (2) Anna Fosdick, born October 2, 1653.

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<sup>9</sup> Middlesex County Probate Files, Case No. 5629, Old Series. Citation supplied by Judge Fosdick.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* John Fosdick, the oldest surviving son, was the administrator of his father's estate. The affidavit of Jonathan Fosdick, the youngest son, claimed that the property he had received from his father before the latter's death, belonged to his mother—"ye daughter of Mr. Nicholas Shapley"—and thus could not be included in his father's estate. He hinted darkly that "There are some yt are children of an other adventure"—evidently referring to his father's second wife. As we have seen, only one child, Sarah, is recorded as the issue of this marriage. (See footnote, p. 35.)

\* For details see Appendix II.



- (3) *Samuel Fosdick*, born December 15, 1655. The next lineal ancestor, designated as Samuel I.
- (4) John Fosdick, born February 20, 1657.
- (5) Stephen Fosdick, born November 1, 1660.
- (6) Thomas Fosdick, born November 1, 1662.
- (7) Joseph Fosdick, born April 1, 1665.
- (8) Sarah Fosdick, born April 22, 1667.
- (9) Jonathan Fosdick, born August 25, 1669.

*By Elizabeth Betts*

- (10) Sarah Fosdick, born June 11, 1687.

## CHAPTER VII

### SAMUEL FOSDICK I

**I**N the long line of the Fosdick generations in America, the third lineal ancestor, Samuel Fosdick the first, in ability and achievement stands well toward the top. Known by his contemporaries as Captain Samuel Fosdick of New London, he was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, December 15, 1655—the third child of John Fosdick.

He was doubtless named after his uncle, Samuel Fosdick, Stephen's second son, who, as we have seen, died at the age of thirty, on a trip to Barbados. The name Samuel was carried down through five or six generations of the family, and Lewis Fosdick in his genealogy adopted the happy expedient of using the words "first," "second," and "third" to identify the individuals.

It is important to note that this Captain Samuel Fosdick of whom we are now speaking was the first of the family line to be born in America. His father and his grandfather had been born in England; but with this third generation the tie of recollection was broken. Undoubtedly Samuel heard many discussions of the old family home overseas, and of his grandfather's return from Charlestown to Wenham magna, and the three trips across the Atlantic. In another generation or two, even these details had been lost, and the knowledge of where in England the family came from—if indeed it came from England at all—had been forgotten.

Judging from his subsequent career, it is obvious that Samuel Fosdick received an education better than the average. From the very beginning Charlestown had a deep concern about its schools, and it is one of the honorable facts of the time that a public school, which was also in part at least a free school, was established in this place in 1636, eleven years prior to the often-quoted law of Massachusetts, compelling towns to maintain schools.<sup>1</sup> "To read, to write and to cypher" was

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<sup>1</sup> See Richard Frothingham, Jr., *History of Charlestown* (1845), p. 65.



regarded by our forefathers as an indispensable qualification, and they endeavored to maintain this standard even when wilderness conditions made it almost impossible.<sup>2</sup>

In 1675, when Samuel Fosdick was twenty years old, he was "drafted," to use a modern word—"impressed" was the contemporary word—in connection with the great Indian war which broke out that year—King Philip's War, as we now call it, or the Narragansett War, as it was called by our ancestors. Samuel was one of a group of twenty-one young men called to service by the town of Charlestown. Six of this group "absented themselves"—so the record runs—"skulking from place to place, avoiding this immediate press."<sup>3</sup> Samuel was not one of the six. Instead, two months later he was serving as a "corporall" in Captain Samuel Mosely's famous company of "volunteers," mustered at Dedham, and took part in the skirmishing that preceded the savage battle at the Swamp Fort. In that battle Captain Mosely's troops led the van, and their casualties were heavy. In the list of "Wounded and Slayne" the record states that "9 wounded men are on 6 Jan'ry at Rhode Island with 5 souldg<sup>rs</sup> to attend the wounded men." The list of the five soldiers is headed by "Corporall Samuel Fosdick."<sup>4</sup>

After the battle at the Swamp Fort, Captain Mosely and his men continued in service between the Connecticut River and Plymouth until the slaying of King Philip at Mount Hope in the summer of 1676 ended a war fought on both sides with unmitigated brutality. The records show that Samuel was paid £2 14s. for his services, or for part of his services, in the campaign.<sup>5</sup>

This story has a footnote. In December, 1675, before the battle at the Swamp Fort, and while its Narragansett expedition was mustered at Dedham, the Massachusetts government promised the soldiers that if they were successful "they should have a gratuity of land, besides their wages." In 1728, 53 years after the promise was given, and 28 years after the death of Samuel, the General Court named a committee to lay out two townships to be given to the Narragansett soldiers or their heirs. Samuel Fosdick was an accredited grantee from Charles-

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Mass. Archives, Vol. 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

town and a parcel of 192 acres was allotted in his name. It was claimed by Samuel Fosdick II as his heir. Samuel II immediately sold it to his brother-in-law, James Tilley, of New London, for £12, the deed reciting that the property had been "freely granted and bestowed" on soldiers in the Narragansett War, "of which Mr. Sam'l Fosdick, late of New London, Deceased, was one." The property given in this grant to these veterans of the war was later (1770) incorporated as the town of Westminster, Massachusetts; and it is interesting to note that the family of the wife of Harry Emerson Fosdick, the great-great-great-grandson of the original owner, today occupies the property, or at least a site very close to the property, of this soldier-ancestor, 275 years ago.<sup>6</sup>

With the close of the war, Samuel returned to Charlestown; according to the church records he was baptized there in 1677.<sup>7</sup> His grandfather, Stephen Fosdick, when he died twelve years before, had left him by will the old homestead on Sconce Point—"the house and barne and the yard and garden belonging to it within Charlestown, lying by Mr. Shapleys, with the Hay lott in Durty marsh, and the two cow commons and the wood lott. . . . to him and his heyres, male or female, and so to rune in the generations of the Fosdicks forever." Samuel's father, John, however, had the use of this property during his lifetime, and he was at this moment only fifty years old. It may have been this circumstance that led the ambitious Samuel, now twenty-two and apparently with some training as a blacksmith, to seek adventure in new fields.

Why he chose New London, Connecticut, is not difficult to determine. His uncle, Benjamin Shapley, his mother's younger brother, had already gone to New London and in 1672 had married Mary Picket, the eldest daughter of John Picket, one of the town's wealthiest merchants. Benjamin was only ten years older than Samuel, and as the Shapley and Fosdick properties adjoined on Sconce Point, they must have known each other intimately.

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<sup>6</sup> Information supplied by Judge Fosdick. See Rev. Wm. S. Heywood, *History of Westminster* (1893). See also Geo. M. Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip's War* (1896).

<sup>7</sup> Together with his brothers, John, Stephen, Thomas and Jonathan. (Record Book of the First Church of Charlestown, p. 238.) It is significant that James, the eldest son, who was born out of wedlock, was not baptized until a later date, 1680.



In any event, Samuel arrived in New London about 1680, and the first record that we have of him is his marriage to Mercy Picket, the youngest daughter of John Picket, November 1, 1682. He and his Uncle Benjamin became brothers-in-law. Mercy's father and mother had died, and she was an orphan, but she brought her husband a very considerable estate, in land and personal property. Two months after the marriage Samuel bought 200 acres from Owenca (or Owaneco), described in the deed as "Sacham of the Mohogs,"<sup>8</sup> and he himself designated as "Samuell Forsdick, late of Charlestown in the collonie of ye Masachusetts." From the description in the deed it seems evident that this 200 acre parcel lay on the Pawkatuck River in what is now Stonington, about fifteen miles east of New London.

Samuel's wife came from distinguished stock in New England. Her mother, Ruth Picket, was the daughter of Jonathan Brewster, son of Elder William Brewster, who came over in the "Mayflower"; and his blood flows in the veins of the descendants of this first Samuel Fosdick. Mercy Fosdick's standing in the colony as well as her property gave her husband an exceptional start in his career in New London.

Another factor that was undoubtedly of inestimable help was his relationship to Daniel Wetherell. William Wetherell, as we have seen, had been the teacher of the school at Charlestown, and he was probably related to John Wetherell, the brother of Stephen Fosdick's wife, Sarah. William's son Daniel came to New London in 1659, and soon took his place as one of its leading citizens. At one time or another he was town clerk, justice of the peace, moderator, judge of probate, and judge of the county court. As Miss Caulkins remarks in her history of New London: "No man in the county stood higher in point of talent and integrity."<sup>9</sup> Wetherell also married into the Brewster family (1659), his wife being Grace, daughter of Jonathan Brewster, and sister of Mercy Fosdick's mother. To Mercy, therefore, and doubtless to Samuel, he was Uncle Daniel;<sup>10</sup> and

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<sup>8</sup> Owaneco was the son and successor of Uncas, sachem of the Mohegans. Owaneco signed the deed to Samuel Fosdick with a mark in the form of a well drawn turkey or fowl. The deed is dated January 8, 1682, which under the old calendar would make it 1683.

<sup>9</sup> Frances Mainwaring Caulkins, *History of New London* (1852), p. 363.

<sup>10</sup> Another tie-in in the family circle is the fact that Wetherell's daughter, Hannah, married Mercy Fosdick's brother, Adam Picket. They were first cousins. As a result, Wetherell, who was Adam Picket's uncle, became his father-in-law.

the effect of his wide influence can be seen in the life of his nephew.

By training, as we have noted, Samuel was a blacksmith, and later he became a shipwright. But like many of his contemporaries he engaged in a variety of occupations. He seems to have known a good deal about surveying; he became something of a specialist in handling estates (probably due to Wetherell's influence); he had a prominent place in the military life of the colony; and later he became deeply interested in its politics. His first house was on New Street, New London, afterwards called Cape Ann Lane;<sup>11</sup> but later he seems to have built a homestead on what is now Shaw's Point.<sup>12</sup> His real estate holdings were extensive. He owned much of Shaw's Point, including the land on which the New London County Historical Society is now located.<sup>13</sup> He also owned property on the harbor between what is today Tilley Street and Golden Street. He was one of the three owners of Plum Island in Long Island Sound. An inventory taken by the probate court at the time of his death showed ten different parcels of land standing in his name, located both within and without the township of New London. Some of these properties were undoubtedly farms, for, like most of his contemporaries, Samuel Fosdick had a deep stake in farming. His land on Plum Island was well stocked and productive,<sup>14</sup> and we can assume that the acres he bought from Owaneco and others were under cultivation.

Apparently his basic occupation during his career in New London was that of shipwright. New London was a growing port, and shipbuilding was a major industry. But beginning in the latter part of the 1680's, and certainly in the last decade of the century, Samuel's time was increasingly occupied with other pursuits, particularly the management of estates in probate proceedings. Thus in 1691 we find him the administrator of the estate of Abell Moore.<sup>15</sup> Later he was executor of the estate of John Wheeler,<sup>16</sup> and he acted for the probate court

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<sup>11</sup> See Miss Caulkins' unpublished manuscripts in the New London County Historical Society. Cape Ann Lane is now called Jefferson Avenue.

<sup>12</sup> Shaw's Point has had several names, including Morton's Point and Fosdick's Point or Neck.

<sup>13</sup> The Shaw Mansion, built in 1756. See Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 286, footnote.

<sup>14</sup> Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

<sup>15</sup> Public Records of Connecticut, Vol. IV, p. 46.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 322.



in making an inventory of Thomas Harris' estate.<sup>17</sup> When Robert Bartlet left his entire estate to the town of New London to promote the education of its children, Samuel, with two others, was named on the committee of administration.<sup>18</sup> In the musty court records we come across such items as the following:

Sam<sup>ll</sup> ffosdyke, desired by Sam<sup>ll</sup> Beebe to goe into the Neck to Vew [view] land where one Jeames Rogers dwelling hous standeth, doe find that the hous is builte one land Jeste to the Westt of Mr. James Morgans lott.

The result of this survey was a law suit brought against Rogers by Beebe for trespass.<sup>19</sup> Samuel himself was frequently involved in law suits, generally relating to estate matters.<sup>20</sup> In 1698 he was appointed alternate on a committee to renew the bounds of a tract of land purchased of "Allumps alias Hyenps and Aquntus, Indian sachims, which tract of land is situate at a place commonly called Quinnibaug."<sup>21</sup> The same year he was a member of a committee to lay out a township "at or near the place called Jeremiahs Farme upon the rode to Newlondon beginning at the north bound of Twentie Mile River, and so to extend southward to a river called Deep River, and to extend eastward to the bounds of Haddum seven miles."<sup>22</sup>

During this period, too, Samuel Fosdick took a leading part in the military affairs of the colony. When the first of the French and Indian wars broke out in 1690 with the midnight burning of Schenectady, the General Court of Connecticut, seeing "a necessity of utmost endeavors to prevent the French of attacquing and setleing at Albany," ordered two foot companies to be "raysted with all speed" and sent to the defense of Albany. Samuel was appointed the lieutenant in one of the companies, "the company to consist of sixty foure English souldiers, besides officers, and as many Indians as will go forth with them."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Jacobus: *American Genealogist*, Vol. 12, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

<sup>19</sup> New London Probate Records (Connecticut State Library), File 457.

<sup>20</sup> Public Records of Connecticut, Vol. IV, pp. 46, 303, 322.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 272.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 281.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 16.

The command of the united land forces of New England and New York was given to Fitz-John Winthrop, son of John Winthrop, Jr., the founder of New London. Sir William Phipps, of Massachusetts, commanded the fleet, and the plan of campaign involved a pincers movement, with the army attacking Montreal, while the ships, sailing up the St. Lawrence River, attacked Quebec. Winthrop marched with his forces to Lake Champlain but could get no further. The Indian auxiliaries failed; provisions were scarce; and he was obliged to retreat to Albany for subsistence. Meanwhile, the fleet was no less unfortunate; it sailed too late and on arriving at Quebec found the place too strong to attack. The whole enterprise was an utter failure.

It was undoubtedly a vivid experience for Samuel Fosdick. In King Philip's War he had become familiar with the country east of the Connecticut River; but in this western adventure he came into contact not only with a new terrain but with new problems. Apparently he returned with an enhanced reputation. In 1697 he is referred to as "Capt. Samuel Fosdick" and is sitting as a member of the Governor's Council in Hartford to discuss the defense of New London against French threats. Orders were sent "to take care that the fort at Newlondon be furnisht with men, armes and amunition, and that all things thereto belonging be in good order for the defense of the town and the repulse of the enemy; and also to list a certain number of men in each of the townes adjacent—viz. Norwich, Stonington, Lyme and Preston—to march to Newlondon or to any other place within the countie of Newlondon upon any sodain approach of the enemy. . . . Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Fosdick appointed and comissionated by the Councill to be Captain of the souldiers to be listed out of the several townes for the service above mentioned."<sup>24</sup>

However, the war between France and England terminated that same year, and the threat to the colonies momentarily subsided.

It was as a member of the General Court or Assembly of Connecticut, however, that Samuel Fosdick attained his greatest influence and usefulness. For six terms he served in Hartford as one of the two deputies from New London, i.e., 1694,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 219.



1696, 1697, 1698, 1699 and 1700, and his name appears frequently in the records of the proceedings. He was a member of many of the Court's committees and appears to have been an outstanding delegate. One of these committees, whose function seems to have been peculiarly significant, was directed "to consider and advise this Assembly in such pollitick and prudentiall affairs as doe concerne either the promoting [of] good order and government in making new laws, or repealing or altering laws formerly made, or in such affairs as doe concern the public weal in promoting and advancing of trade, as also to advise in all affairs that doe concern the souldierie designed to be sent to Albany."<sup>25</sup>

When in 1699 the town of New London received its first patent or charter from the General Court, it is perhaps significant that Samuel Fosdick's name was mentioned with 14 others as "pattentees," his associates being men of the standing of Fitz-John Winthrop, Daniel Wetherell, and the Rev. Gurdon Saltonstall. The patent ran to "all the inhabitants freeholders in the said township of Newlondon as if named."<sup>26</sup> The names actually spelled out in the charter represented the leadership of the community.

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<sup>25</sup> *Public Records of Connecticut*, Vol. IV, p. 161.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NEW LONDON BACKGROUND

CAPTAIN SAMUEL FOSDICK cannot easily be visualized without some knowledge of his background. He was part of his surroundings, and his habits and thoughts were shaped by them. In the 1680's and 1690's New London was a small, rough frontier settlement, two generations removed from the more sophisticated standards of the mother country. It had a floating, self-confident population, inured to the hardships of the sea, to artisan labor and to the tillage of a mediocre soil. As a later historian said of them,<sup>1</sup> its people were noisy, quarrelsome and litigious—and the court records of the time amply sustain the charge. One gets the impression of the entire adult population airing their grievances in the law court. Cases of slander, trespass and assault, and actions over real and personal property crowd the court calendars. Even the Winthrops, father and son—the New Londoners who were elected governor of the Colony of Connecticut—were frequently in litigation with their neighbors; and the minister of the church, the Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall, was not above pushing his claims and seeking his rights in court.

Aside from the subtle influences of the church there was little to temper the untamed forces which frontier life evokes, and even the church tended to reflect the hard-favored aspects of the seventeenth century. The iron grip of the Puritan ecclesiastical establishment on the lives of the inhabitants of New England had not yet been broken, and a random reading of the New London criminal court records shows its sternly repressive and often unlovely aspects. One comes across items such as these:

John Lewis and Sarah Chapman presented for sitting together on the Lord's Day under an apple-tree in Goodman Chapman's orchard. 40s fine.<sup>2</sup>

Widow Bradley presented in having a child born out of wedlock . . . £5 fine, and also to wear on her cap a paper whereon her offence is written, as a warning to others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frances Mainwaring Caulkins, *History of New London* (1852), p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> New London County Court Records, 1670.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1673.



Goodwife Wiley presented for not attending public worship and bringing her children thither, fined 5s.<sup>4</sup>

Complaint being made to this Court by John Prentice against William Beebe for keeping company with his daughter Mercy, and endeavoring to gain her affections in order to a marriage, without acquainting her parents . . . said Beebe to pay fine of £5.<sup>5</sup>

Samuel Fosdick was a prominent member of the church. As we have seen, he was baptized in Charlestown before he came to New London. In 1692 he and his wife "owned the covenant,"<sup>6</sup> and in 1697 they were admitted to the church.<sup>7</sup> They saw to it, too, that their children were baptized, and there is every evidence that throughout their lifetime they were faithful adherents to the institution.

The minister of the church in Samuel's day was a man of extraordinary force of character, the Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall. This Saltonstall was a masterful spirit, in stature of heroic size, and in bearing stern, solemn, and severe. "He was a scholar, but not a man of weak digestion," says the record. "He had one of the strongest bodies in the Colony. His hand upon the helm was muscular and firm."<sup>8</sup> A graduate of Harvard College, he was the great-grandson of Sir Richard Saltonstall, at one time Lord Mayor of London. His first name was derived from his grandmother, Muriel Gurdon (wife of Richard Saltonstall), whose family was connected with Great Wenham in England; and it is entirely possible that some special relationship, based on old family ties, existed between Samuel and the minister of his church, although it was said of Salton-

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1667.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1687.

<sup>6</sup> Records of the New London First Congregational Church, Vol. I, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 7. The steps toward joining the church in the 17th century were threefold. First, one was baptized, generally in infancy. The second step was "to own the covenant"; this meant accepting the discipline of the church under the terms of the Half-way Covenant, which granted one the privilege of having one's children baptized. The third step was full church membership, which required a "public profession of faith," generally under the questioning of the minister. To satisfy the questions of Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall must have been a searching experience. As a matter of fact, relatively few people were admitted as full members of the church during his incumbency.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from *Sir Richard Saltonstall of New England—Ancestry and Descendants* (1897), p. 209.

stall that "he did not invite familiarity." During the time that Samuel was serving on the General Court in Hartford, Saltonstall was frequently present, and they were on some committees together.

Saltonstall's ideal of government was a theocracy, and with his imperious temper he ruled the church and the settlement with an iron will and an iron hand. A few of his sermons are still extant: occasionally he would preach six hours without a break. His concern seemed to be with doctrine and external considerations. A cross upon the steeple, an organ in the loft, an altar in the chancel, were to him "the abomination of desolation," and he considered a cassock, a stole, or a surplice as "garments borrowed from the wardrobe of the Scarlet Woman."

This was the dominant theological tone of the time. A sermon preached in Charlestown by Samuel Mather, a friend of Saltonstall, and widely circulated throughout New England, including New London, was levelled against ten of the chief prevailing "idols" or "abominations"—both of them favorite words with our forefathers. The ten "idols" or "abominations" were these:

- (1) The surplice, with the rest of "that Popish wardrobe of superstitious garments, hoods, tippets, rochets, etc."
- (2) The sign of the cross in baptism, "so gross and palpable that some who could swallow down all the rest—the very organs and all—could not digest it."
- (3) Kneeling at the Lord's Supper.
- (4) Bowing to the altar, and setting the communion table altar-wise.
- (5) Bowing at the name of Jesus.
- (6) "Popish holidays." This included Christmas.
- (7) The custom of consecrating churches; "for there is no warrant in the New Testament to sanctify any one place more than another."
- (8) Organs and cathedral music; "for the Scriptures: 'Let all things be done unto edifying,' and 'I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also,' cashiered and excluded them out of the gospel worship."
- (9) The book of Common Prayer: "a grand idol of the Church of England."
- (10) A church government by bishops.<sup>9</sup>

This was the kind of doctrine that Samuel Fosdick heard in the church again and again. One can perhaps picture him with

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Frothingham, Jr., *History of Charlestown* (1845), p. 200.



Saltonstall riding their horses over the old Indian trails between New London and Hartford to attend some meeting of the General Court—the old trails that were soon to tie together the new settlements of Chesterfield, Salem, Colchester, and Glastonbury. Perhaps they talked about these doctrinal matters, with Samuel in the role of a humble auditor, listening to the grim, sententious utterances of this doughty Covenanter who, although Samuel did not live to see it, was to end his career not as a minister but as Governor of the Colony of Connecticut.<sup>10</sup>

No record of Samuel Fosdick's life in New London would be complete without at least a reference to the "Rogerenes" and the impact of this riotous religious sect upon the community. It was strictly an indigenous growth. Established by John Rogers, and earnestly supported by his father James, who had been a loyal member of the New London church, it was based in part on Quaker doctrines, in part on Baptist doctrines, with some ideas borrowed from the Sabbatarians in Rhode Island. The Rogerenes—a nickname based on the patronymic of their founders—believed in baptism by immersion, but they were opposed to the observance of a Sabbath, and regarded all days as equally sacred or secular. They did not believe in any official ministry of the gospel, nor in having any edifices set apart for public worship, nor in any vocal prayers, even in the family. They considered it a sin to administer the oath in civil courts—"a profanation of the Holy Name"; they were hostile to all laws relating to religion or religious worship; they scorned marriage ceremonies by civil or church authorities; they refused to resort to drugs, medicines, or physicians in the cure of disease.

The rejection of the Sabbath and of a resident ministry would in any event, at that time, have been exceedingly repugnant to the community at large. The Rogerenes exacerbated this natural reaction by their determination to "testify" against the errors of their generation. Entering church on Sunday, the women would take out their knitting or sewing, and the men would chop wood on the doorstep during the prayer and the preaching. They would drive carts by the church, apparently

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<sup>10</sup> Saltonstall was eleven years younger than Samuel. He was 25 years old when he became minister of the church at New London.

on purpose to disturb the assembly. They did not hesitate to interrupt the stern-faced Gurdon Saltonstall in the middle of his sermons and call him a liar. "They would come to church," said a contemporary, "nearly or quite naked, and in time of public worship behave in a wild and tumultuous manner, crying out and charging the most venerable ministers with lies and false doctrine. . . . They seemed to take pains to violate the laws in the presence of officers, that they might be complained of, and have an opportunity to insult the laws, the courts, and all civil authority."<sup>11</sup>

New London rose to the challenge. The disturbers were fined, whipped, set in the stocks, and imprisoned. Even by the standards of the day they were treated in a harsh and cruel manner, but "they gloried in their endurance of it."<sup>12</sup> As in all ages, violence beget violence, and fanaticism stirred up a counter-fanaticism to meet it. For two decades—during the entire time of Samuel Fosdick's life in New London—the community was in an uproar. The riotous sect seemed to grow on persecution. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. John Rogers estimated that he had spent a third of his life in prison, and he counted up his stripes and afflictions in the manner of St. Paul. But he refused to be silent. Imprisoned for trundling a wheelbarrow into the church during the service, he hung from the jail window the following proclamation:

I, John Rogers, a servant of Jesus Christ, doth here make an open declaration of war against the great red dragon . . . and against the false church that rides upon the beast, and against the false prophets who are established by the dragon; and also a proclamation of derision against the sword of the devil's spirit, which is prisons, stocks, whips, fines and revilings, all which is to defend the doctrines of devils.<sup>13</sup>

The story is told—perhaps apocryphal—of an incident where Saltonstall outwitted John Rogers. The latter married himself, without civil or ecclesiastical ceremony, to a maidservant, Mary Ransford, whom he had bought—probably one of the class of persons called Redemptioners. She was many years his junior. One day Saltonstall met them on the street. "John," he said,

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Thomas P. Field, *A Discourse delivered at the 200th Anniversary of the First Church of New London* (1870).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 212.



in an air of doubt and surprise, "are you really taking this servant maid, bought with your money, for your wife?" "I truly am," answered Rogers belligerently. Turning to Mary he asked: "Are you going to have as a husband this man who is so much older than yourself?" With equal belligerence she answered in the affirmative. "Then," said Saltonstall, "by virtue of the laws of this colony, I pronounce you man and wife." "Ah, Gurdon," said the baffled Rogerene after a pause, "thou art a cunning creature."<sup>14</sup>

It must be admitted, however, that Saltonstall was scarcely the man to deal with the broad difficulty. The wild and lawless acts of the Rogerenes were particularly distasteful to his dignified and conservative spirit, and he became the leading proponent in the criminal and civil actions against them. In 1698 he went to the extreme of bringing a suit against Rogers for slander. By modern legal standards it was a flimsy case—indeed, a frivolous case. He accused Rogers of saying, in the hearing of others, that he (the plaintiff) had promised to participate in a public "dispute" with the defendant, the dispute "to be founded on the Holy Scriptures"; but at the last moment, so Rogers was alleged to have said, Saltonstall "did decline, shift or wave the said dispute which he had promised." This "lying, false and scandalous report," according to the plaintiff, had caused him great damage which he asked the court to assess. With an inflamed public opinion on his side, a jury of prominent citizens of New London gave him a verdict of £600—a savage penalty even for those harsh times.<sup>15</sup> Money was in short supply, and few, if any, of the inhabitants of the colony could command so large a sum. Such a verdict could be satisfied only by the wholesale seizure of the defendant's property, his lands, buildings, and cattle.

But religious dissent cannot be subdued by law suits, nor is uniformity in doctrine the product of physical force. A friendly historian, writing in 1870, made this comment: "It may be that Saltonstall was à little too stately and reserved in dealing with these singular people; and a manner somewhat more gen-

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<sup>14</sup> This story appears in many sources. See Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 216, and Thomas P. Field, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> *County Court Trials—New London County* (Connecticut State Library), Vol. VII, p. 218.

tle and conciliatory than his might have checked the evil in the germ."<sup>16</sup>

It took time for the disturbance to die down. Saltonstall had left the ministry and Samuel Fosdick was in his grave before the Rogerenes gradually abandoned their policy of interrupting the services of the established church. In this atmosphere of religious discord and violence Samuel spent a large part of his adult life, and the Rogerene movement was undoubtedly the dominant topic of discussion in the New London of his day.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Field, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Fifty years later, in 1764, the Rogerenes, led by a grandson of the founder, issued forth again to "testify" against the "idolatry" of their contemporaries. The reaction of the New Londoners was even more violent than in earlier days, and the disturbances lasted for nearly two years. See Caulkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 490 ff.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DEATH OF SAMUEL FOSDICK I

CAPT. SAMUEL FOSDICK died the latter part of the year 1700 or early in 1701 at the age of forty-five.<sup>1</sup> In the long line of the Fosdick ancestors of this branch of the family his is the youngest death recorded. His grandfather, Stephen, lived to be 81; his father, John, 90; his son, Samuel II, perhaps 100; and his grandson, Samuel III, 82. One wonders whether some accident was involved, but the records are silent. It is possible that his death was preceded by an illness of some duration. In 1700 he was re-elected for the last time as a delegate from New London to the General Court at Hartford, and seems to have served through at least part of the term. He was not elected in 1701, nor does his name appear in any public record after 1700, although immediately prior to that time—in 1698, 1699, and early in 1700—he is prominently mentioned as foreman of various juries, as a litigant in court, etc.<sup>2</sup> We can only surmise that some unforeseen contingency brought him to his death at the height of his career.

He was undoubtedly buried in “ye Ancientest Buriall Place,” the only cemetery then available in New London—on Meeting House Hill, the highest land in the town plot. Here a whole generation of the early settlers lies buried—most of the graves now without markers, if indeed they ever had them. As a commentator said, fifty years ago: “In this burying ground the founders of the Town were laid with their families reposing about them. They mingled with the earth, and succeeding generations have been gradually deposited over and around

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<sup>1</sup> The probate records give the date of death as September 9, 1701, but this is the date that Mercy Fosdick, Samuel's wife, was appointed administratrix of the estate. Caulkins gives the date as August 27, 1702, which is the date the inventory of the estate was approved. Lewis Fosdick gives August 27, 1700, but cites no authority.

<sup>2</sup> Court Records, New London County (Connecticut State Library), Vol. VII, pp. 221, 227, 243, 248, 263. The last date which I can find relating to him is June 5, 1700, when he filed a report in a probate case. (Estate of Samuel Beebe, Probate Record, File 457—Connecticut State Library.)

them.”<sup>3</sup> It was in this graveyard on the hilltop, eighty-one years later, that Benedict Arnold, commanding British troops, sat on horseback as he watched the burning of New London.

Samuel's wife, Mercy, was appointed the administratrix of his estate.<sup>4</sup> He had died without leaving a will. The total value of the real and personal property, according to the appraisal, amounted to £587 5s. 8d., a sum which in those days represented if not wealth, at least a comfortable affluence. The dower rights of his wife—"widow and relict" as she is called in the records—represented the customary one-third of the realty for life, and one-third of the personalty forever; the balance being divided into portions equal in value, with the oldest son, Samuel II, receiving a double portion.<sup>5</sup> The following rather unusual item appears in the accounting: "Sixteen pounds is deducted to pay for the cure of his son Samuel Fosdick's leg performed by Dr. Nich (olas) Ayroutl."<sup>6</sup> Dr. Ayroutl was a French physician residing in Wethersfield.<sup>7</sup>

A glance at the inventory of the estate will show the ample and comfortable style of housekeeping to which the colonists—two generations from the "Mayflower"—had attained by 1700. Apart from the ten distinct parcels of land already referred to, and £80 cash, the following items (not complete) are given as illustrative, with the values established by the appraiser placed after some of them:

"His wairing apparel"—£9  
Silk stockings and silk "waisteds"  
8 blankets, a rug, a coverlet, small  
quilt and a cotton counterpane  
3 silk blankets  
20 pairs sheets  
1 square "fether" bed with "red  
curtains, bed-sted bolster, two  
pillows and a large quilt—£10"

<sup>3</sup> Edward Prentis, *Ye Ancient Buriall Place of New London* (1899). It lies on Hempstead Street, northwest of the County Court House.

<sup>4</sup> Probate Records (New London) Journal, Vol. I, p. 11. One of her first responsibilities as administratrix was to bring a suit against Capt. Samuel Chosson, for debt, "for sixty-two gallons and a half of mollasses, due for Slaves, together with Just Damages." (Court Records, New London County [Connecticut State Library], Vol. VII, p. 321.) The date of the suit can be surmised but is not definitely given.

<sup>5</sup> Probate Records (New London), Vol. A, p. 316.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See Miss Caulkins' unpublished manuscripts in the New London County Historical Society.



3 other feather beds and bolsters  
and various smaller beds  
4 bolster cases  
8 pillow "bears"  
12 yds. silk "drugit"  
5 yds. "cloath serge"  
15 yds. "linsey woolsy"  
2 chests of drawers  
1 cupboard  
2 trunks  
2 Table linen  
2 "cubbard cloaths"  
1 large looking glass  
3 smaller looking glasses  
2 square tables  
3 other tables  
15 chairs  
14 "frames for chairs"  
1 "parcel of books"  
5 pewter platters<sup>8</sup>  
1 doz. pewter porringers  
9 pewter basins, 8 pewter plates, 1  
pewter chamber pot  
6 pewter candle sticks  
3 pewter dishes  
1 pewter Tanker quart pot  
3 iron candle sticks  
3 doz. iron "platt"  
2 silver cups  
4 silver spoons and "old plate"  
1 gold ring  
1 bag of buttons  
1 leather bag for silk  
1 doz. hair combs  
4 "sords" and belts  
8 guns  
3 pistols  
1 cleaver  
1 ax  
1 adz  
1 handsaw  
1 warming pan  
2 fire pans  
2 great brass kettles  
1 brass skillet  
1 iron kettle  
1 iron pot

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<sup>8</sup> Pewter is invariably spelled "puter."

1 frying pan  
 2 wheels  
 1 tongs  
 1 gridirons  
 1 chopping knife  
 2 spits  
 "a jack and box and heaters"  
 earthen ware  
 wooden ware  
 "scales and weights"  
 "glass bottels"  
 3 horses  
 2 yoke of oxen  
 6 cows and 2 calves  
 110 sheep  
 5 swine  
 "a cart and yoke with furniture"<sup>9</sup>

On September 17, 1702, Mercy Fosdick appeared before the Probate Court and "made Oath that she had made unto the Apprizers a true account of her deceased husband's estate to the best of her knowledge, and if anything further considerable appear to be his Estate she will ad it to this Inventory."<sup>10</sup>

She did not long remain "a widow and relict." Perhaps for economic reasons, or for reasons of security, our ancestors did not allow a great deal of time to elapse between the termination of one marriage and the beginning of the next.<sup>11</sup> On December 6, 1703, Mercy married John Arnold of New London, by profession a blacksmith and shipwright. Perhaps he had been a friend of Samuel. She had had eight children by her first husband; she had two more by her second husband, both of them daughters.<sup>12</sup>

As a "widow and relict" she was the legally constituted administratrix of the estate of her first husband. The estate was not settled when she remarried, and under the laws of the time her husband assumed the responsibility which she had hitherto

<sup>9</sup> Probate Records (New London) Vol. A, pp. 180 ff. The original inventory is in the Connecticut State Library in Hartford.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Samuel's mother-in-law, Ruth Picket, the daughter of Jonathan Brewster, remarried eleven months after the death of her first husband. She had six children by Picket, and four children by her second husband, Charles Hill. She died in 1677; Hill remarried the following year, and had one more child. (Frances Mainwaring Caulkins, *History of New London* (1852), pp. 285 and 307.)

<sup>12</sup> Ruhamah, who married an Ely of Lyme, Conn.; and Lucretia, who became the second wife of John Proctor, A. M. (Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 368.)



borne. Thereafter it was he who in the name of his wife reported to the probate court. In 1706, three years after their marriage, he submitted a statement of personal expenses such as "going to Hartford—£1 10s. 0d." Included in the bill were two items which sound a bit ungracious:

To keeping John Fosdick [Samuel's second son] from December 6, 1703 to December 1705.

To keeping Thomas Fosdick [Samuel's third son] and many Fosdicks from December 6 to this day.

However, he made no charge for either of these items, his probable intent being to prove to the court that he had been generous. His wife's property was now his own, and he wanted the court to know that with his own money he had taken care of her children by a former husband. Samuel Fosdick's estate was finally settled September 28, 1706, three years after Mercy Fosdick's marriage to Arnold. Arnold died in 1725, and her death followed three months later. They were both buried in "ye Ancientest Buriall Place," and their gravestones are standing today.

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*The Children of Samuel Fosdick\**

- (1) Samuel Fosdick, born August 15, 1683. Died in infancy.
- (2) *Samuel Fosdick*, born September 18, 1684. The next lineal ancestor, designated as Samuel II.†
- (3) Mercy Fosdick, born November 30, 1686.
- (4) Ruth Fosdick, born June 27, 1689.
- (5) Anna Fosdick, born December 8, 1691.
- (6) John Fosdick, born February 1, 1693-4.
- (7) Thomas Fosdick, born August 20, 1696.
- (8) Mary Fosdick, born July 7, 1699.

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\* For details, see Appendix III.

† It was a frequent custom in colonial days and even later to give a child the name of a deceased child.

## CHAPTER X

### SAMUEL FOSDICK II

WITH Samuel Fosdick II we come to an ancestor whom Lewis Fosdick in preparing his genealogy found "baffling."<sup>1</sup> The difficulty was due to what was apparently Samuel's restlessness—a trait which took him from New London to Charlestown, from Charlestown to Oyster Bay, Long Island, and then back again to Charlestown, and finally at the age of 83 on "a longue Journey or Voige" from which he never returned.

Samuel was born in New London September 18, 1684, the eldest child of his parents. What school advantages he had we do not know. From the numerous instances of persons in the second generation at New London who could not write their names, it is evident that education was at a low ebb. This situation evidently weighed on the minds of the inhabitants, for in 1682 the Grand Jury brought in the following presentment:

New London presented for not having a grammar school.  
Fined £10; also for not having an English school for reading  
and writing. £5.<sup>2</sup>

Sixteen years later, in 1698, we find the town voting a tax "for the use of a free school that shall teach children to Reade, Write and Cypher and ye Lattin Tongue. . . . By reading is intended such Children as are in their psalters."<sup>3</sup> But two years later the Grand Jury again brought in a complaint against New London "for want of a grammar school."<sup>4</sup> It was not until 1701, when Samuel Fosdick was 17 years old, that a grammar school was finally established.<sup>5</sup> However, we know that he could at least write his name—and write it with a bold hand—and judging by his subsequent career, it seems probable that he acquired a reasonable education.

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Fosdick to the author in 1910.

<sup>2</sup> County Court Records, 1682.

<sup>3</sup> Frances Mainwaring Caulkins, *The History of New London* (1852), p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> County Court Records, 1700.

<sup>5</sup> Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 397.



He was sixteen years old when his father died, and, as we have seen, he inherited, as the oldest son, a double portion of the estate. This included the major portion of the homestead on Fosdick's Neck, now Shaw's Point, together with a substantial fraction of the property his father had purchased from Owenca, Sachem of the Mohogs, and other incidental property as well. Shortly after his father's death, real estate in New London began to appreciate in value, and Samuel, who seems to have had a canny eye for trading, undoubtedly found himself in relatively comfortable circumstances, although somewhat later he appears to have had trouble with debts. He apparently lived in his father's homestead in New London—probably with his mother before her second marriage—and the fact that his new stepfather, John Arnold, did not mention Samuel's name in his bill to the probate court seems to indicate that the young Fosdick had acquired some degree of independence.

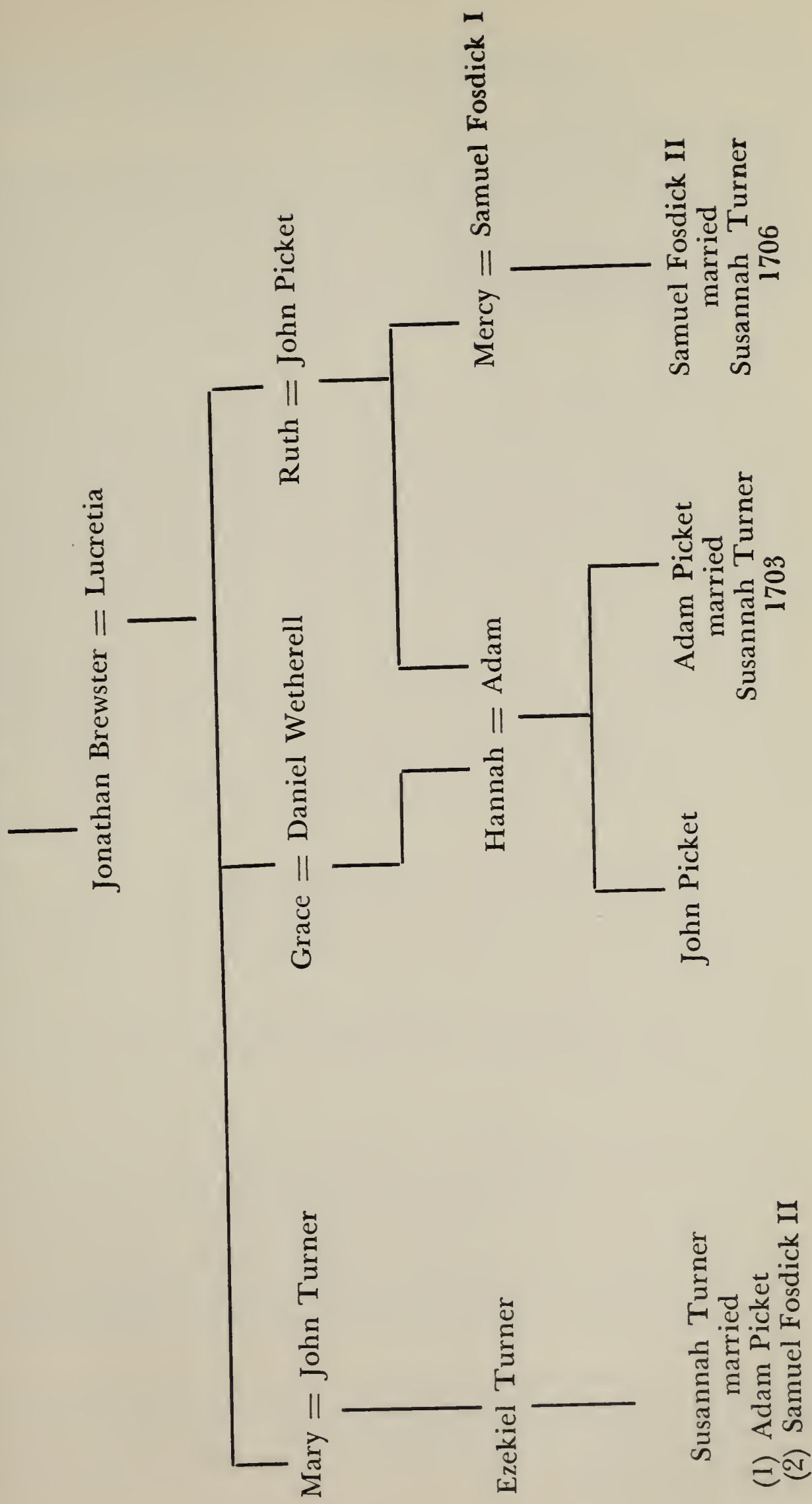
Like his father before him and his oldest son after him, Samuel was a blacksmith; at least that seems to have been his major occupation. A blacksmith was an important personage in colonial days. Hinges, bolts, bars and cranes, and all the iron work necessary for building and repair, were the products of the blacksmith shop, and the records of the time show numerous instances of towns competing for the services of a skilled artisan who could wield the hammer for the public benefit. Thus in the early days of New London the inhabitants entered into a contract with a blacksmith from Roxbury to build him a house and shop, pay the expenses of his transportation, and provide him with half a ton of iron, "also twenty or thirty pound of steele."<sup>6</sup> Samuel doubtless had no such inducements as these, for he was in competition with other blacksmiths; but ship-building after 1700 was a flourishing trade in New London, and the blacksmith and the shipwright were intimately related.

On July 13, 1706, at the age of twenty-two, Samuel married Susannah Turner, his second cousin. She was a great-granddaughter of Jonathan Brewster, being descended from Brewster's daughter Mary; while Samuel was descended from Brewster's daughter Ruth. For Susannah it was a second marriage; her first husband, whom she married in 1703, was Adam Picket, who was also her second cousin, as well as being Samuel's first

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Elder William Brewster





cousin. Adam, a mariner, was lost at sea shortly after his marriage, and the childless Susannah turned to Samuel Fosdick. (See chart, previous.) Their marriage, as we shall see, was not without its tribulations.

In 1714, at the age of thirty, Samuel became involved in serious difficulty—a difficulty which perhaps colored the rest of his life. In a private diary kept from 1711 to 1758 by Joshua Hempstead of New London occurs this laconic entry under date of December 20, 1714: “Sam<sup>l</sup> Fosdyck stood in ye Pillory ye 3rd time.”<sup>7</sup>

Extensive research was necessary to uncover the nature of the difficulty. It started apparently in a wretched family squabble between Samuel Fosdick and his first cousin, John Picket. The squabble was probably aggravated by the fact that John Picket was the brother of Adam Picket, Susannah’s first husband. In this complicated relationship a situation developed which soon got out of control.

The first record that we have of the matter is a suit brought by John Picket against Samuel in June, 1714, for the payment of a bond—or note, as we would call it today—for £50 which Samuel was alleged to have given Picket in December, 1713.<sup>8</sup> Samuel’s defense was that he had “paid in full according to the contents of the bond.” The jury found for the plaintiff, and assessed the defendant the costs of the suit: £1 18s. 8d. The court accepted the verdict but reduced the note from £50 to £17 18s. 8d., apparently upon evidence that some payment had been made.

Within two weeks John Picket struck again, this time bringing suit against Samuel for defamation of character. The pleading was as follows:

On or about the 9th day of February last past, at the house of Capt. John Prout [?] the defendant did publish a Lye with intent to defame the plaintiff, saying that the Plaintiff stole a paper out of the defendant’s pocket by which the defendant was damnified 40 pounds. Now the plaintiff complaineth that although the plaintiff is truly innocent of any such fact, nevertheless that defendant with an intent to Destroy the Reputation of the plaintiff,

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<sup>7</sup> *Diary of Joshua Hempstead*, published by the New London County Historical Society, p. 41. The diary contains a unique mass of material about the day-to-day life of the citizens of New London.

<sup>8</sup> *County Court Trials of New London County* (Connecticut State Library, Hartford), Vol. VIII, p. 175.

as well as his Livelyhood, [did] publish the same as above which is to the damage of ye plaintiff, as he saith, Three hundred pounds.<sup>9</sup>

Samuel Fosdick denied the pleading. The jury, however, found for the plaintiff but awarded him only 5s. damages and the costs of the suit, £3 4s. 4d.

Thereafter events moved to a dramatic conclusion. Late that autumn,<sup>10</sup> the grand jury of New London returned the following "presentment" against Samuel Fosdick:

The Jurors of our Soverign Lord ye King upon their oath present that on the first Tuesday of June last past, at New London, Samuel Fosdick of New London, not having ye fear of God before his eyes, but falsely and fraudulently contriving by falsehood and forgery, Contrary to ye peace of our Sovereign Lord ye King, to cheat and defraud John Picket of New London of a Certaine summ of money due to him from ye said Fosdick upon a bond, and to prevent Justice, did falsely, fraudulently and wickedly Forge and Counterfeit a Certaine Receipt under ye hand of ye said John Picket for ye Summ of twenty pounds, and produce ye same at ye County Court in New London June last to answer said Bond, unto the Great Damage of the said John Picket and against the Peace of our Soverign Lord ye King and Contrary to ye form and effect of divers Laws in ye Case made and provided.<sup>11</sup>

To this indictment Samuel Fosdick entered a vigorous denial, and, while the details of the trial are not of record, it appears that John Picket himself in his testimony absolved Samuel of damage. The record says: "Mr. John Picket in open court released the said Fosdick of wrong he hath received." Probably family influences were at work to ameliorate the situation, and one can imagine that Mercy Fosdick, who was not only Samuel's mother but John Picket's aunt, would use all her influence to settle the quarrel. But the Court found Samuel guilty, and the sentence ran as follows:

It is therefore considered by this court that ye said Samuel Fosdick shall stand in ye Pillory three several Lecture Days or Days of Public meeting for ye space of half an hour Each Time.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately the date in the court records is undecipherable.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.



The pillory stood on Meeting House Hill, close to the door of the church, and here Samuel, whose offense could scarcely have won him any measure of public sympathy, was exposed to the taunts and jeers of his contemporaries.

It will be recalled that in his will Stephen Fosdick, Samuel's great-grandfather, left the old homestead on Sconce Point in Charlestown to his grandson, Samuel I, "after my sonne John Fosdicke's decease." John Fosdick, as we have seen, did not die until 1716, fifteen years after the death of his son. Consequently, in that year the Sconce Point holdings became the property of Samuel II, as heir to his father. It was undoubtedly this circumstance that determined his removal from New London to Charlestown, although his humiliating experience with the court two years earlier may also have been a factor.

The date of removal can only be conjectured. His first six children—Mercy, Mary, Samuel, William, Ruth, and James—were all born in New London; James, the youngest, being baptized there on June 2, 1717.<sup>13</sup> His next three children, Ezekiel, Jesse, and Susanna, were born in Charlestown, the eldest of them on February 17, 1719-20. Sometime during that three-year period, therefore, the family undoubtedly removed to Charlestown, where, as is shown by the description in deeds to property, Samuel continued his trade as a blacksmith.<sup>14</sup>

Scarcely had he settled down in his great-grandfather's property on Sconce Point than he brought suit against the Selectmen of Charlestown. It was a suit in trespass in which Samuel demanded £80 10s. damages for a road or "way" which apparently the town had put through his ancestral acres. At a town meeting, attorneys or "agents" were chosen to defend the case, and it appears to have been bitterly fought in court. Samuel lost his suit and had to pay the costs, amounting to £3 8s.<sup>15</sup>

Six years later, in 1728, he had another brush with the Select-

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<sup>13</sup> Church Records, 1717.

<sup>14</sup> It is possible that during this period he had business connections in both New London and Charlestown, for he was buying and selling land in the former place as late as 1729, and he sold his pew in the New London church in 1728. (Miss Caulkins' manuscript papers in the New London County Historical Society.) Samuel Fosdick II never was admitted to membership in the church either at New London or Charlestown. His wife, Susannah, joined the church in Charlestown in 1741. (Church records.)

<sup>15</sup> Middlesex County Court files, 1722, 259-3.

men of Charlestown, this time of a more serious nature. Apparently his relations with his wife, Susannah, had entered a critical phase. For some reason which is not clear Susannah brought her complaint not directly to the court, as would be customary, but to the Selectmen. She told the Selectmen that her husband had threatened her life and "had abused her to that degree that she is afraid to cohabit and live with him." She also stated that "he [Samuel] has disposed of all his Creatures [cattle and hogs], packed up all his Household goods, and leased out all his Lands for a considerable Term of years; thereby to strip her and her children of all manner of Support, and is thought he has designes to leave her."

The Selectmen therefore petitioned the Court of General Sessions "to be pleased to take this affair into your wise consideration, so that the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Fosdick may be obliged to make suteable Provision for his said wife and children, so that they may not become a charge to the said Town of Charlestown." The justices of the Court therefore ordered Samuel to appear before them.<sup>16</sup>

We have to remember, of course, that we are dealing here only with the allegations of the plaintiff; the case for the defendant is not included in the record. However, the Court evidently felt that Susannah's claims were not without some merit, for two days later Samuel executed a curiously involved kind of trustee document, in which he granted to the Selectmen of Charlestown, for the time being, all his "housing and lands in said Charlestown and Stoneham," except certain parcels—providing in relation to these excepted parcels that if he should sell them "or any part thereof for the payment of my debts or other ways," his wife should sign the deeds with him and should have half the money remaining after the payment of his debts. The main purport of the document was expressed in these words: "To have and to hold unto the said Selectmen during the life of my said wife, provided she sign and execute deeds as above said, unless I return and live with her again until death part us, to the use and intent that the said Selectmen, as above said, shall suffer the said Susannah always to enjoy the premises, and take the whole profit thereof for the maintenance of her own person and children as above said, and

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1728, 254-3.



that she shall have for herself and use as aforesaid, the one half of my household goods.”<sup>17</sup>

With this lawyer-like document duly signed and sealed, Samuel apparently said good-bye to his children—and perhaps to his wife—shook the dust of Sconce Point from his feet, and departed for Oyster Bay, Long Island, taking with him his eldest son, Samuel III, who was at that time eighteen years old.<sup>18</sup>

It is possible, of course, that Samuel II went back to New London for a while before crossing the Sound to Oyster Bay. But we know he had already been in Oyster Bay because his name appears as witness to a deed there in 1727.<sup>19</sup> On December 5, 1728, he sold six acres of his property in New London to his brother-in-law, James Tilley, for £160, describing himself as “Samuel Fosdick of Charlestown in the County of Middlesex in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, formerly of New London in the County of New London and Colony of Connecticut.”<sup>20</sup> Four years later, on September 15, 1732, in another deed by which he sold his father’s homestead in New London for £200, he described himself in a somewhat breathless sentence, as “Samuel Fosdick of Oyster Bay in Queens County on Nassau Island within his Majesties Province of New York, late of Charlestown in the County of Middlesex, Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, Blacksmith.”<sup>21</sup>

Somewhere between these two dates—1728 and 1732—Samuel established his home in Oyster Bay, and thus began the Oyster Bay traditions of the family.

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<sup>17</sup> Middlesex Records, Vol. XXIV, p. 469.

<sup>18</sup> It is just possible that Samuel III had preceded his father to Oyster Bay where he may have been serving as a blacksmith’s apprentice.

<sup>19</sup> Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. V, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Land Records of New London, Vol. IX, p. 83.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 247. The description in these deeds disposes once and for all of the apprehension shared by Lewis Fosdick that the Samuel Fosdick of Oyster Bay may not have been the Samuel Fosdick of New London and Charlestown. Until these deeds came to light the only authority was Caulkins’ unsupported statement that Samuel II finally settled in Oyster Bay. Caulkins, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

## CHAPTER XI

### SAMUEL FOSDICK II AT OYSTER BAY

SAMUEL FOSDICK II undoubtedly went to Oyster Bay because there was an opening in that village for a blacksmith. Apparently the village had earlier experienced some difficulty in attracting the services of an artisan "to mend utensils and wares," and for a number of years the settlement of a blacksmith had been a matter of public concern.<sup>1</sup> Like his father before him, and like many of his generation, Samuel's interests were not confined to a single pursuit. One of the early Oyster Bay deeds relating to him describes him as a "potter," and according to Caulkins, who wrote a hundred years ago and whose reliability is generally unchallenged, he was keeping a taven there in 1749.<sup>2</sup> He certainly, too, maintained an interest in agriculture, or at least in sheep and cattle raising; in 1750 the Town Meeting of Oyster Bay decreed that "Samuel Fosdick marks his creatures with a latch mark upper side the near ear and a nick under the same, and a half-penny under the off ear."<sup>3</sup>

But it is as a blacksmith that Samuel is generally described in the deeds by which he bought and sold property. The first deed, in 1736, represented his purchase from Hezekiah Holdridge, himself a blacksmith, of a garden spot and house "on the north side of the highway that leads to the mill."<sup>4</sup> It was on this site that he established himself in his trade. What he had been doing in the four-year interval between 1732, when he describes himself as living in Oyster Bay, and 1736, when he bought his first property there, one can only conjecture. Perhaps he had been working as an associate with Holdridge, the blacksmith, and bought him out. In 1742 the Town Meeting granted him "the Liberty of Six Rods of Beach against Blevin's

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Queens County* (W. W. Munsell and Co., 1882), p. 476.

<sup>2</sup> Caulkins: Manuscripts and papers in the New London County Historical Society.

<sup>3</sup> Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. V, p. 682.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 252.



Bridge, so called, for to Builde a wharfe.”<sup>5</sup> In 1748 and again in 1750 he bought further parcels, “lying near the Town”—this time from Charles Wright—one for £132, a large sum in those days.<sup>6</sup> In 1752 he bought from Penn Townsend a quarter of an acre, for £25, directly across the road from his smith shop.<sup>7</sup> He had various smaller dealings by which he rounded out and adjusted his holdings in the neighborhood of his shop.<sup>8</sup> From the standpoint of convenience the shop was located in an excellent position in what was then known as the Town Spot of Oyster Bay; it was a little east of the mill (diagonally across from the millpond), and on the north side of what is now West Main Street, west of the present Larrabee Avenue, then called Quogue Lane. Samuel’s house adjoined his shop, and after 1752 he had another house across the road.

During the twenty-year period from 1732 to 1752 Samuel Fosdick seems to have been well occupied in Oyster Bay, with blacksmithing as his major concern. His son Samuel III worked with him, probably as an assistant, and later perhaps as a partner. Doubtless during this period he occasionally visited Charlestown. Certainly he was there in 1751 and apparently spent some months in Boston.<sup>9</sup> It is obvious, too, that he kept up his contacts with New London, for in 1738 he seems to have bought ninety acres at nearby Nahantic.<sup>10</sup>

Samuel’s life at Oyster Bay, like most of the rest of his life, was a stormy period. Admitting the litigious disposition of his generation, it would seem that there was some peculiarly belligerent streak in his make-up, some element that led him into constant quarrels. In the eighteen-year period between 1736 and 1754 he was involved in no less than twenty-six separate

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 309. James Blevin had land at the cleft hill, or the Clefts, on the west side of Oyster Bay. A stream in this cleft runs into the Bay and a bridge had been built over the little brook.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 2 and 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 253. The deed recites that Samuel Fosdick is to “Make and Maintain a good tight Raile fence . . . such as will stop Hogs and Creturs on the East and South Parts joining to Penn Townsend’s land.”

<sup>8</sup> These are cited in Lewis Fosdick’s genealogy, pp. 49-50.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Bellows Wyman, *Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown* (1879), Vol. I, p. 356.

<sup>10</sup> This is mentioned in the Caulkins papers, but I find no support for it in the New London Land Records.

cases in the Court of Common Pleas of Queens County.<sup>11</sup> In six of these cases he was the plaintiff; in twenty he was the defendant. He sued his neighbors and they sued him. For example, Silas Clark haled him into court, and he returned the compliment by bringing an action against Silas and his wife, Sarah. Unfortunately the nature of these suits is not given in the records, but one may suspect that they represented the usual run of colonial cases in courts of common pleas—actions in debt, trespass, defamation, etc. It would seem that in most of his legal adventures Samuel emerged on the losing side. Toward the end of his stay in Oyster Bay the litigation reached a kind of crescendo: in 1751 he was involved in four cases; in 1752, nine cases; and in 1753, five cases. Each case, of course, meant a trip to the county seat at Jamaica, over twenty-five miles away, and Samuel must have spent many a weary hour on horseback, plodding back and forth.

As we have already noted, Samuel is reported as keeping a tavern in Oyster Bay in 1749. It may well be that these law suits, reaching their culmination shortly after that date, grew out of some unfortunate experience in this new type of activity. However, there is nothing in the records which throws any light on the question.

It seems not improbable that the difficulties growing out of this orgy of litigation—whatever may have been its cause—had something to do with Samuel's decision to leave Oyster Bay. In any event, beginning in 1752 and 1753, he began to dispose of his property there. First, he deeded to his son Samuel, "for and in consideration of the fatherly affection which we have for our son," a substantial bit of property on Mill River Road.<sup>12</sup> Then bit by bit he disposed of most of his remaining property; and in 1756 he sold to Benjamin Hawxhurst in one block his blacksmith shop and the land lying on the north and south sides of Main Street, "with all the houses, buildings, fences, waters, and all the appurtenances thereunto belonging to both pieces of land."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Minutes of the Court of General Sessions and also of Common Pleas, beginning in 1722.* County Clerk's Office, Jamaica, L. I. The volume is unindexed and only partially paged, but the writing is fairly legible.

<sup>12</sup> Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, p. 29. This deed is discussed in the chapter relating to Samuel III.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 255. The sale price was £127 10s.



Another reason for Samuel's shift of location at this time is doubtless the fact that his wife, Susannah, died in Charlestown, February 22, 1753, in her 68th year. The obvious incompatibility between husband and wife was probably responsible—in part at least—for his twenty-year stay in Oyster Bay. She was buried in the old graveyard in Charlestown, in the same lot with her husband's grandfather, John; and her gravestone is standing today.

Thereafter Samuel seems to have spent much of his time in Charlestown, perhaps living once again in the old homestead on Sconce Point. However, he was also in Oyster Bay, although with the sale of his blacksmith shop one wonders what his occupation was. Perhaps he worked in his son's shop, or perhaps his other interests had prospered to a point where his former trade was no longer necessary. In 1758, in his 74th year, he married again, his second wife being Elizabeth Le Gross, of Oyster Bay. She was probably the widow or daughter of Philip Le Gross, a long-time resident of the village.<sup>14</sup> The marriage was by banns and was performed at Oyster Bay by the Reverend Samuel Seabury, the Church of England Rector of St. George's Church at Hempstead.<sup>15</sup> For a man who in his younger years had listened to the preaching of Gurdon Saltonstall, Samuel had gone very far indeed.

No further information about his wife has been discovered, and it seems probable that she died shortly after the marriage. The following year we find him once again in Charlestown because he filed with the authorities there the necessary "notification" about entertaining a stranger in his house.<sup>16</sup> In 1763 he appeared in Oyster Bay for one last final lawsuit,<sup>17</sup> and then for four years the record is silent. Whether he lived with his son in Oyster Bay or with his younger children on Sconce Point it is impossible to determine. On April 23, 1767, when he was

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<sup>14</sup> Philip Le Gross' son John was apparently acquainted with Samuel Fosdick III and his wife, Deborah. They were witnesses to a deed in which John was involved in 1759. (Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, p. 410.)

<sup>15</sup> The record is in the Rectory of St. George's Church at Hempstead. At that time the Episcopalian church in Oyster Bay was included in the Hempstead parish.

<sup>16</sup> Wyman, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 356.

<sup>17</sup> Fosdick vs. Underhill. The dispute was over a land title. *Minutes of the Court, etc., op. cit.* Samuel lost his case.

83 years old, he made his final will. The first paragraph is as follows:

I Samuel Fosdick of Charlestown In the County of Middlesex and Province of the Massichucits Bay in New England and Being att Present in good helth of Bodey and of Sound Memory and Understanding, and about to take a longue Journey or Voige and being farr advanced In years and age, and not Knowing that I shall Ever Return heir again, Do make and ordain this my Last will and Testimen.<sup>18</sup>

The will recites that he had made a previous will in 1751 in the lifetime of his wife Susannah, to whom he had given the disposal of all his personal and moveable estate *after his decease*, but—and he could not resist a final dig at his wife—she had distributed it all “in the time of my abcenc,” and his daughters still possessed it. However, he now confirms to them all that his wife distributed or “all that they have taken into possession since her decease,” on condition that “they do not claim any part of my estate otherways hereafter.” His sons James and Ezekiel got the bulk of his real property. To James went the old homestead, Sconce Point, “that which was given me by my great-grandfather, Stephen Fosdick, by will dated February 23, 1663.” Oddly enough Samuel’s will does not mention his son, Samuel III. We know that he had given him real estate in Oyster Bay, and perhaps he had made other provision as well. His Oyster Bay interests were evidently in his mind when he wrote this final sentence in his will: “And I do hereby Exclud all those my above mentioned children to clame or have aney Right to aney Estate which Doth belonge to me In the Govrment of new York.”

With that sentence the curtain falls, and there is no record of him thereafter. Where did the “longue Journey or Voige” take this restless and contentious ancestor? Lewis Fosdick hints that he may have gone to England, but research in the parish registers of Great Wenham and some of the surrounding towns and villages fails to reveal any trace of him. It may be that his family never heard of him again. It is conceivable that he died at sea. His will was not probated until 1784, seventeen years after its date and a hundred years after his birth.<sup>19</sup> The Revo-

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<sup>18</sup> Middlesex Probate Records, 8129.

<sup>19</sup> Middlesex Probate Records, Vol. 67, pp. 117-119.



lutionary War had come and gone. His death was probably presumed from long absence; the proofs in relation to it are not included in the probate records, nor can its date be even approximately fixed.<sup>20</sup>

With the passing of Samuel II, Sconce Point and the old homestead disappear from the scene. James, Samuel's third son, inherited the property, and he was the last member of the family to own it, for soon after the Revolution it seems to have been sold. Charlestown was burned by the British in 1775 as a prelude to the attack on Bunker Hill; and the homestead on Sconce Point was probably one of the 400 houses which were destroyed, because only a few survived. Perhaps that was the compelling reason that led James Fosdick a few years later to dispose of the property. In 1845 when Frothingham wrote his history of Charlestown, Sconce Point had long since been smothered by the Navy Yard, and its location could not be easily determined. With the changes and accretions of a century, one cannot even guess where it stood. Somewhere in a maze of docks and cranes and machinery lies the fair property which, in Stephen's dream, was "to run in the generations of the Fosdicks forever."

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*The Children of Samuel Fosdick II\**

- (1) Mercy Fosdick, born 1707.
- (2) Mary Fosdick, born March 28, 1708.
- (3) *Samuel Fosdick*, born March 11, 1710. The next lineal ancestor, designated as Samuel III.
- (4) William Fosdick, born February 4, 1712-13.
- (5) Ruth Fosdick, born January 25, 1713-14.
- (6) James Fosdick, born November 20, 1716.
- (7) Ezekiel Fosdick, born February 17, 1719-20.
- (8) Jesse Fosdick, born November 7, 1722.
- (9) Susannah Fosdick, born October 11, 1724.

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<sup>20</sup> Caulkins in her miscellaneous papers in the New London County Historical Society reports that a Samuel Fosdick of New London who had married a Turner died in North Carolina about 1786. I thought the solution of the mystery was at hand, but the man turned out to be a son of Deacon Thomas Fosdick. In the Deacon's bible, some leaves of which I own, the statement is made that this particular Samuel was born in 1757 and "died 1788, May or about the first of June, within some 20 miles of Wilmington" (N. C.). The similarity of the wives' names—Turner—was a confusing coincidence.

\* For details see Appendix IV.

## CHAPTER XII

### SAMUEL FOSDICK III

IN reaching the era of the next ancestor, Samuel Fosdick III, we come to a point where we begin to see, although still vaguely, something more than shadowy characters portrayed by vital statistics and court records. Family traditions, handed down largely by word of mouth, begin to form about definite people, and the picture gradually absorbs color and verisimilitude. Thus we learn that Samuel III, a tall, dark-haired man of strong physique, was quiet and reticent—descriptive qualities which we cannot apply to earlier ancestors because we know so little about them. We learn, too, that this Samuel had peculiarly happy relations with his family—and yet his life ended in tragedy. In temperament he must have been quite a different man from his fractious and tempestuous father. His name appears in the court records of his time in only one law suit—a dispute which seems to have been settled out of court.<sup>1</sup> And yet, as we shall see, he was capable of taking great risks in defense of a principle.

Little is known about his youth. He was born in New London, March 11, 1710, and was perhaps eight or nine years old when his family moved to Charlestown. His great-grandfather, John Fosdick, died when he was five years old, and his adolescent years were doubtless spent at Sconce Point—the homestead of his great-great-grandfather, Stephen Fosdick. It was in Charlestown that he probably went to school, and, while we know nothing about his education, it appears to have been adequate for the times. He followed his father's and his grandfather's trade as a blacksmith, and, as we have seen, he was his father's companion when the latter went to Oyster Bay somewhere around 1728.

What his relations were with his mother we do not know, nor

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<sup>1</sup> *Samuel Fosdick, Jr., vs. John Townsend*, May 1762. *Minutes of the Court of General Sessions and of Common Pleas*, County Clerk's Office, Jamaica, N. Y.



how often, if at all, he returned to Charlestown to see her.<sup>2</sup> The first record that we have of him in Oyster Bay is his baptism in 1750, when he was 39 years old, by the Reverend Samuel Seabury, Rector of St. George's Church at Hempstead.<sup>3</sup> Four generations of Puritanism at last gave way to its avowed enemy: the Church of England.

Two years later, in 1752, he married at the age of 42—far later in life than the average of his contemporaries. His marriage was most fortunate. His wife, Deborah Shadbolt—the first of a long line of Deborahs in the Fosdick family—was only 17 years old, 25 years younger than her husband. She was the daughter of Ezekiel and Deborah Shadbolt and the granddaughter of Morris Shadbolt. Both her father and her grandfather were men of some prominence and substance. Her family was Episcopalian, and her grandfather had been one of the early vestrymen of the Episcopal Church at nearby Hempstead. Five months after the marriage, Samuel Fosdick II, blacksmith, and her father, Ezekiel Shadbolt, house carpenter, joined in giving the newly-wed couple a deed, dated December 7, 1752, for nineteen acres of land.<sup>4</sup> The deed recited that it was made “for and in consideration of the fatherly love and affection which we have for our son and daughter, Samuell Fosdick, junior, and his wife Deborah Fosdick . . . and for their Dutiful and well Behaviour Toward Uss, and for there further Incowragement of Well Liveing in the world.” The property involved “all that tract of land, Houses and swamp which we have lying on the west side the highway that leads up the east the Mill River Creek so called.” It was located in the village of Oyster Bay (known as the Old Purchase) and extended from what is now Mill River Road to West Main Street.<sup>5</sup> (See map, page 79.)

Unfortunately the marriage which started so auspiciously was of relatively short duration. Deborah died in 1759, aged 24,

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<sup>2</sup> It may well be that the break with Charlestown was not abrupt. Samuel Fosdick III was taxed in Charlestown in 1727, 1729, 1732 and 1733. The nature of his property there is not known. (See Thomas Bellows Wyman, *Genealogies and Estates in Charlestown*, Vol. I, p. 356.)

<sup>3</sup> The record is at the Rectory of St. George's Church, Hempstead, L. I. It reads: “Baptised at Oyster Bay Samuel Fosdike, adult, March 25, 1750.”

<sup>4</sup> Reference has already been made to this deed, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, p. 29.

leaving behind three small children: Silas, aged 6; Morris, 4; and Sarah, 3. Morris died a year later.

Samuel married a second time in 1760. Again it was a fortunate choice. His wife was Mary Wright, a widow whose maiden name was Moore, and, like Deborah, she must have been considerably younger than her husband. She was of Irish descent, her family coming from Ballinasloe; and, again like Deborah, she was a member of the Church of England. We cannot be certain that she could read or write, for in 1763 she signed her name to a deed by using a mark.<sup>6</sup> But she must have been an extraordinary person—a young woman whose restless energy, black hair, and black eyes left their stamp on the next three generations of her descendants. Long after her death she lived in the memory and tradition of her children and grandchildren. “No bigger than a wasp,” one of her sons said of her, referring to her small stature and slight build; and yet during a period of social breakdown and chaos, which when she married Samuel neither she nor her contemporaries could foresee, hers was the character and spirit around which the family coalesced.

She had three small children by her former husband, Sarah, John, and William,<sup>7</sup> and she and Samuel were the parents of nine children, all of whom, in an age of high infant mortality, grew to maturity.

As we have indicated, Samuel Fosdick II sold his blacksmith shop in 1756. About this time, or perhaps earlier, his son appears to have located his smith shop approximately a hundred yards northeast of the site occupied by his father, and closer to the Sound. The proximity of this new shop to what was then tidewater suggests the possibility that like his grandfather, Samuel I, this younger Samuel was combining his trade with that of the shipwright, with which, in those days, blacksmithing was intimately related.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, p. 347.

<sup>7</sup> *The Wright Family of Oyster Bay*, compiled by H. D. Perrine, 1923. Sarah was born in 1750, John in 1754, and William in 1757. William seems to have died before Mary Wright married Samuel. John went to sea and was never heard from again. Sarah, his sister, married Zophar Weeks and lived in New York City.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel III's new site for his blacksmith shop lies today at the end of Willow Place, which runs off Bayside Avenue. (See map, p. 79.) After Samuel's time, this same site was used as a blacksmith shop for over a century by three generations of the Titus family. The old shop was torn down within recent years.



Apparently Samuel and his first wife, Deborah, lived on the property conveyed to them by their parents; but in 1763, four years after Deborah died, he and his second wife, Mary, sold this property for £250.<sup>9</sup> Thereafter he seems to have lived on an adjacent parcel of land, his house standing on what is now the south side of West Main Street, immediately adjoining the millpond, almost directly opposite the entrance of the present Bayside Avenue. (See map, opposite.) How and from whom he acquired this new property is not known. Here he apparently lived until after the Revolution.<sup>10</sup> In 1767, he sold a slave, a Negro woman named Venus, for £55, the record of the transaction stating that she was the property of his two oldest children, Silas and Sarah.<sup>11</sup> Thereafter until the outbreak of the Revolution the records are silent in regard to Samuel's activities, and there is little that can be gleaned about his life.

It is not impossible to believe that during this period, in addition to his blacksmith trade, he was engaged in the sheep and cattle business. As we have seen, his father was granted an "earmark" for his "creatures," and according to custom these earmarks were handed down from father to son. The 60,000 acres of the Hempstead Plains made ideal grazing lands, conveniently located near port and market, and by the time of the Revolution it is estimated that there were 7,000 horned cattle and as many sheep in the combined towns of Oyster Bay and Hempstead. These animals were driven for the most part to the New York City market and sold there on the hoof; and the general prosperity of the Oyster Bay region was in no small measure due to this lucrative industry.<sup>12</sup> Samuel's wife's family—the Wrights—were among the early settlers in Oyster Bay, and its numerous descendants were prominent in the town's affairs. Several of them appear to have been engaged in the sheep and cattle business, and it is not unlikely that Samuel had similar interests.

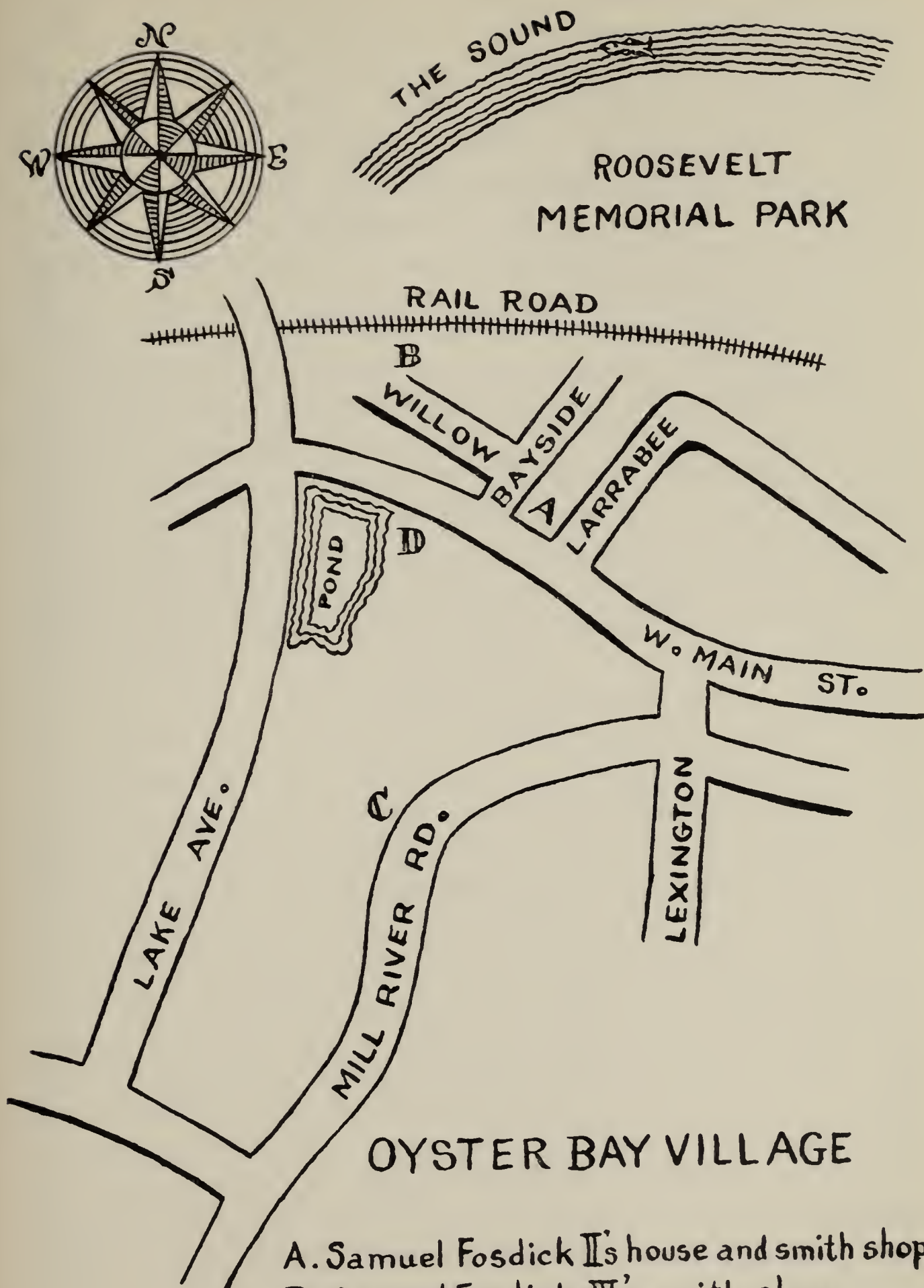
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<sup>9</sup> Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, p. 347.

<sup>10</sup> The house has long since disappeared. From its front door Samuel's smith shop would have been plainly visible diagonally across the road, down toward the shore of the Sound. Today the shore line has been filled in and moved out many hundreds of yards to create the Roosevelt Memorial Park.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Fosdick. I was unable to identify his citation: "Queens Co. Records."

<sup>12</sup> See Bernice Schultz, *Colonial Hempstead* (1937), Chap. VII.



- A. Samuel Fosdick II's house and smith shop
- B. Samuel Fosdick III's smith shop
- C. Samuel Fosdick III's house before 1763
- D. Samuel Fosdick III's house 1763~1784



Certainly his situation before the Revolution seems to have been increasingly prosperous. It was the Golden Age of the late Colonial Period. The French wars were over; the standards of living, at least on Long Island, had greatly improved; and in the tradition of the family Samuel was in very comfortable circumstances. "Wealthy" is the word that has been applied to his condition. As we have seen, he had twelve children altogether and it is interesting to note that the nine children of his second wife were spaced exactly two years apart—beginning in 1760 with his son Samuel and ending in 1776 with his son Solomon, who arrived when his father was 66 years old.

Meanwhile, across this picture of prosperity and family happiness were creeping, unseen, the long shadows of the Revolution. Oyster Bay had had a "Committee of the Sons of Liberty" in 1766 to protest against the Stamp Act, and vigorous resolutions had been adopted;<sup>13</sup> but the Act was repealed, and in retrospect the incident seemed like a regrettable but temporary misunderstanding between the King and his loyal subjects in the colonies. It was incredible that further difficulty would develop. At least this was the feeling in Oyster Bay and in the other towns on Long Island. The news of the Boston Tea Party and the rioting mobs in New York that burned the Governor's house came as a profound shock. Unlike the seaports that faced the Atlantic, the towns on the Sound had no far-flung trade. Theirs was a rural population with rural interests. New York City was their principal market, and the impact of Parliamentary restrictions on commerce was not felt as keenly as it was in communities like Boston and Philadelphia. By tradition and instinct the citizens of Oyster Bay were conservative; they were far more Loyalist than Whig. They did not like the idea of Committees of Correspondence stirring up outbreaks of lawlessness. They were not in sympathy with the creation of a Continental Congress, and they reacted strongly against the suggestion of a provincial congress to take over the duties of the regularly constituted General Assembly of the State. They heartily agreed that the British measures were unwise and illiberal, but they were confident that redress could be secured by legal means. A resolution passed by the town of Jamaica, Oyster Bay's neighbor, twenty-five miles to the west, expressed

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<sup>13</sup> Henry Onderdonk, Jr., *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County* (1846), p. 2.

in these words the feelings of most of the inhabitants on the north shore of Long Island: "We do not acknowledge any other representatives but the General Assembly of this Province, by whose wisdom and interposition we hope to obtain the wished redress of our grievances in a constitutional way."<sup>14</sup>

In this strongly growing opinion the people of Oyster Bay were supported by the Reverend Leonard Cutting, the Rector of the Church of England, who from his pulpit condemned the ominous disrespect for law which was sweeping the colonies. Young Samuel Seabury, the son of their former revered rector, the Reverend Samuel Seabury, was writing a series of public letters pointing out that the enforcement of measures proposed by these upstart committees involved a tyranny greater than that of England. "If we must be enslaved," he cried, "it might better be by a King at least, rather than by a parcel of lawless committeemen."<sup>15</sup> The doggerel verse and popular songs, current in Queens County—and elsewhere—at the time, reflected the bitterness of the moment. One of them ran as follows:

I fret, I storm, I spit, I spew,  
At sound of Yankee Doodle Doo.<sup>16</sup>

In December, 1774, a special town meeting was called at Oyster Bay to consider the crisis but was adjourned until the regular town meeting in April, 1775, "when"—according to the minutes—"it is hoped that it will be so conducted as to convince the world that his Majesty is not without friends here who will support his government."<sup>17</sup> At the regular meeting in April, 1775, a vote to send a town delegate to the Provincial Congress—as requested by the New York Committee of Correspondence—was lost 205 to 42. However, the minority of 42 citizens issued a vigorous dissenting statement and appointed a delegate from their own ranks. Among the 42 dissenters who signed the statement were four people bearing the name of Wright—undoubtedly kinsmen of Samuel's wife, Mary Wright.<sup>18</sup> It was an evil omen of bitter days to come when, in an atmosphere of

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<sup>14</sup> *American Archives* (4th Series), Vol. I, col. 1191, January 27, 1775.

<sup>15</sup> *Letters of a Westchester Farmer*.

<sup>16</sup> Onderdonk, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts* (Edited by E. B. O'Callaghan, 1865), Vol. I, p. 40.



passion and hatred, the issue divided families and split communities into warring groups.

The news of the Battle of Lexington arrived some days after the meeting and caused an enormous sensation. The New York Committee of Correspondence immediately sent out a circular requesting the counties, rather than the towns, to choose deputies to a provincial congress "to carry the resolves of the Continental Congress into execution."<sup>19</sup> But Queens County hesitated, and during the summer of 1775—particularly after the Battle of Bunker Hill—days of prayer were held in the churches of Oyster Bay "expressive of the truly calamitous situation of this unhappy continent."<sup>20</sup> Large congregations attended, but meanwhile the tide of recrimination and passion was rising to a crest. There was constant threat of disarming "the friends of the King" and taking their leaders into custody.

It was in such an atmosphere that an election for Queens County was finally summoned in November to determine whether deputies should be sent to the Provincial Congress, as demanded by the Committee of Correspondence. The election was held in Jamaica. Even then the justices of Oyster Bay repudiated the call of the Committee—"anonymous advertisements being set up in this Township," they termed it—and they entered their protest in the town minutes.<sup>21</sup> But the election was held, and it is said that every freeholder in the county turned out to vote. Samuel Fosdick made the twenty-five mile trip—probably on horseback. There was no secret ballot in those days, and every man's vote was publicly recorded. Of the 1009 votes cast, 221 favored sending delegates; the votes against the step numbered 788, Samuel Fosdick voting with the majority.<sup>22</sup> The fateful decision he made that day was to bring consequences which affected the rest of his life; although considering the confused pattern of the times through which he lived, it is possible that disaster would have followed him whatever course he chose.

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<sup>19</sup> Onderdonk, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Henry B. Onderdonk, Jr., *Queens County in Olden Times* (1865), p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> The following year, in April, 1776, when the sentiment of the town was rapidly changing, it was voted in the town meeting to erase from the minutes this protest of the justices. At the town meeting of April, 1777, however, when the British were in control, it was voted to reenter the protest. Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents*, pp. 30 ff.

<sup>22</sup> *American Archives, op. cit.*, Vol. III, col. 1389.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION

THE 788 citizens of Queens County who voted against sending delegates to the Provincial Congress could scarcely have anticipated the violent reaction with which their judgment was greeted. Three weeks later the Provincial Congress passed a resolution against the "delinquents" of Queens County, citing their "open contempt of the authority of this Congress" and decreeing that "all friendly and commercial intercourse between said delinquents and other persons of this colony hereby is and shall continue to be cut off, till the further orders of this Congress, and that a list of such delinquents shall be printed and dispersed in handbills and all newspapers."<sup>1</sup> This latter step was immediately taken, and Samuel Fosdick suddenly found himself outlawed and proscribed with 787 of his fellow citizens.

The effect was disastrous. The 788 could not sell their goods in any market; they were forbidden the advice and assistance of legal counsel; in large measure they were shut off from the protection of the courts; and money owing to them was not recoverable. Rumors were afloat—probably well based—that the British man-of-war "Asia," lying off the south shore of Long Island, was supplying them with muskets and powder, and vociferous demands arose from patriotic quarters that the outlaws be disarmed and their leaders arrested.

On December 6, 1775, the citizens of Queens County who were affected by these stern measures issued an appeal, trying to define their position. It was a carefully prepared and obviously sincere statement.

We, freeholders and inhabitants of Queens County, seeing, in common with our fellow-subjects, the deepest anxiety and distress from the most unhappy state of affairs between Great Britain and the American Colonies, and beholding with horror, every appearance of being involved in any the least unfriendly contention with our neighbors, countrymen, and fellow-subjects, have resolved to take every step in our power to prevent so destruc-

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<sup>1</sup> *American Archives* (4th Series), Vol. IV, col. 372.



tive an event—an event which, if permitted to take place, will introduce misery and distress, and open wounds that many years cannot heal. Impressed with these ideas, and the most friendly disposition towards all our fellow-subjects, we make this public declaration of our sentiments and intentions, by which we hope to obtain the approbation of every real friend of liberty.

We declare that we have not the most distant design or inclination to injure or offend any of our fellow-subjects; but if, in exercising the essential privileges of freemen, we unfortunately differed with our brethren as to the mode of bringing the present troubles to a happy conclusion, we have carefully avoided every ostentatious display of that difference in sentiment and every irritating measure. We wish only to remain at peace, nor have we done aught to interrupt the quiet of others. . . .

As many reports have been propagated, tending to excite the resentment of our countrymen against us, and to represent us as entirely inimical to them, we take this opportunity to declare that all such reports are wicked inventions and void of truth.

To remain peaceable and quiet, we again repeat, is our earnest desire; and breathing the most friendly disposition towards our neighbours, countrymen, and fellow-subjects, we entreat them to behold in us those endearing connections, and not suffer a difference in opinion, or mischievous and groundless reports, to hurry them into acts of violence against us, which the laws of God and man will justify us in resisting.

The above declarations are published as containing the sentiments and intentions of a large majority of the inhabitants of the County.<sup>2</sup>

The appeal fell on deaf ears. Following the lead of the Provincial Congress in New York, the Continental Congress, sitting in Philadelphia, delivered on January 3, 1776 a broadside against the recalcitrants of Queens County. All who had voted against sending deputies were put out of the protection of the United Colonies; all trade and intercourse with them was ordered to be discontinued; they were forbidden to travel or live outside the county; they were denied the assistance of a lawyer in any court action; and the publication of their names was to continue for a month.

Taking note of the appeal of Queens County a few weeks before, the Continental Congress made this reference to it:

Whereas, a majority of the inhabitants of Queens County, in the Colony of New York, being incapable of resolving to live and

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, col. 203. The statement was not signed by individuals, and Samuel Fosdick's connection with it we do not know; but he doubtless concurred.

die freemen, and being more disposed to quit their liberties than to part with the little proportion of their property that may be necessary to defend them, have deserted the American cause, by refusing to send deputies as usual to the convention of that colony; and avowing by a public declaration, or unmanly design of remaining inactive spectators of the present contest, vainly flattering themselves, perhaps, that should Providence declare for their enemies, they may purchase their mercy and favor at an easy rate; and on the other hand, if the war should terminate in the favor of America, that then they may enjoy, without expense of blood or treasure, all the blessings resulting from the liberty which they in the day of trial had abandoned; and in defence of which many of their more virtuous neighbors and countrymen had nobly died; and although the want of public spirit observable in these men rather excites pity than alarm, there being little danger to apprehend either from their prowess or example, yet it being reasonable that those who refuse to defend their country should be excluded from its protection and prevented from doing injury. . . .

It was then resolved that Colonel Heard, of Woodbridge, New Jersey, should take five or six hundred Minute Men and some of Sterling's regular troops and disarm every person in Queens County who had voted against sending deputies. Twenty-six leaders, listed by name, were ordered to be seized.<sup>3</sup>

The despair and consternation of the citizens of Queens County can scarcely be described. Utter ruin at the hands of their own countrymen stared them in the face, and even the comforting words of the Reverend Leonard Cutting in the crowded Episcopal church at Oyster Bay brought little reassurance. Quite a number of the proscribed 788 yielded to the mounting pressure and hastened to recant. The newspapers of the day contain a number of appeals couched in words like these: "We pray to be restored to the good opinion of the friends of American liberty"; or "We are convinced of our error and think it absolutely necessary that there should be a representation of said county."<sup>4</sup> Among these apologists Samuel Fosdick's name does not appear.

Meanwhile, the troops under Colonel Heard were advancing on their grim errand. Crossing the East River from New York at what is now 92nd Street, the well-organized expedition of

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, col. 1630.

<sup>4</sup> See *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts*, Vol. I, pp. 200 ff. Also Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island* (1839), p. 165.



900 men, headed by fife and drum, struck east along the frozen, rutted roads of Long Island, stopping at every village and farm lane to search the houses of the "outlaws" and disarm their inhabitants. In ten days' time they reached Oyster Bay, where the troops were billeted in the houses of the villagers. In addition to surrendering their arms, the "outlaws" had to sign a statement apologizing for their vote of the previous November and promising to abide by the decisions of the Provincial and Continental Congress.<sup>5</sup> They also had to subscribe to an oath that they had not concealed or disposed of arms and ammunition other than those which they surrendered.<sup>6</sup>

Of the 788 citizens of Queens County who had been outlawed, 471 recanted and were disarmed. The rest could not be found. They hid themselves in woods, swamps, and morasses, defying all the efforts of Heard's men to discover them. Among this latter group was Samuel Fosdick. His name does not appear on any list of those who apologized or surrendered their arms. Evidently he and 317 other citizens, rather than capitulate to force, were determined to stand by a principle which they considered right.

This phase of Samuel's life, which has to be spelled out from the records, is supported by one of the traditions of the family stemming from Revolutionary times. Over seventy-five years ago, when Lewis Fosdick started to gather the material for his genealogy, grandchildren of Samuel Fosdick III were still living, and many stories were treasured which dealt particularly with the devotion and unusual abilities of Samuel's wife, Mary. One story related to Mary's shrewdness in getting baskets of food to her husband, who in the vague memory of his descendants was either a prisoner or somewhere in barracks or in hiding.<sup>7</sup> It seems probable that the last guess was the correct one: Samuel was in hiding, and unfortunately this period of his life lasted long after the withdrawal of Colonel Heard's forces and the bitter experiences which prompted the doggerel in Queens County:

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<sup>5</sup> *American Archives* (4th Series), Vol. IV, col. 858.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 860.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis Fosdick to the author, 1910.

Colonel Heard has come to town  
In all his pride and glory.  
And when he dies he'll go to Hell  
For robbing of the Tory.<sup>8</sup>

The trials and miseries of the "outlaws" were by no means over, even for those who had recanted and been disarmed. In the mounting wave of tension and suspicion new oaths were demanded and new measures taken to curb what was considered the Tory menace on Long Island. Major General Charles Lee wrote to Washington that in his opinion "not to crush these serpents before their rattles are grown" would be ruinous.<sup>9</sup> The Reverend Leonard Cutting was barred from his pulpit and his church was closed because he refused to omit the regular prayers for the King.<sup>10</sup> The local patriot committee in Queens County—representing power if not numbers—demanded that the "recanters" be more safely secured and asked not only for 500 troops that would be "billeted upon the disaffected and deserting persons," but for a method "of securing all persons disaffected and dangerous—as well above fifty [years of age] as under."<sup>11</sup> In June of 1776 bands of Minute Men were hunting the disaffected in the swamps around Oyster Bay; and the following month plans were being made for 400 men "to drive Massapequa Swamp" in order to capture a band of loyalists.<sup>12</sup> In the meantime, houses were plundered, cattle were seized, and the north shore of Long Island was gripped in the horrors of a civil war.

The end came with dramatic suddenness, although the new dispensation turned out to be as evil as that which it succeeded. A day of prayer had been called in the churches for Sunday, August 27, 1776,<sup>13</sup> but before the day was over Washington had been defeated in the Battle of Long Island, and within a few weeks the British took possession of Oyster Bay and all its neighboring towns and territory. "The loyalists came out of the swamps," said a Whig, "and pulling off their hats huzzaed

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Onderdonk, Jr., *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County* (1846), p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> The Lee Papers, quoted in Bernice Schultz, *Colonial Hempstead* (1937), p. 285.

<sup>10</sup> Onderdonk, *Queens County in Olden Times*, p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts*, Vol. I, p. 334.

<sup>12</sup> Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents*, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> Onderdonk, *Queens County in Olden Times*, p. 52.



for King George.”<sup>14</sup> The tables were turned, and it was now the former Minute Men and their supporters who were hiding in swamps and fleeing by hundreds across the Sound to Connecticut. The spirit of revenge was in the air, and there was no surcease of savagery. Indeed it was reported that in some quarters the Whigs surrendered to the British to obtain protection from their own neighbors.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the British forces were solidifying their position on Long Island and trying to integrate the support of the loyalist elements. In Queens County a petition was prepared—probably at the instigation of British agents—addressed to Lord Howe as representative of the King. It humbly asked for peace and the restoration of royal favor.

Permit us [said the petition] his Majesty’s loyal and well-affected subjects, the Freeholders and Inhabitants of Queens County, humbly to represent to your Excellency that we bear true allegiance to his Majesty, George the Third, and are sincerely attached to his sacred person, crown and dignity; that we consider the union of these colonies with the parent state essential to their well-being; and our earnest desire is that the constitutional authority of Great Britain over them may be preserved to the latest ages.<sup>16</sup>

This petition was signed by 1293 citizens of Queens County. Among the names was that of Samuel Fosdick.

Meanwhile, British troops had moved into Oyster Bay. First came Delancy’s corps of regular soldiers, followed by Fanning’s corps. They were “rude and ill-behaved,” says the record,<sup>17</sup> and the tiny village swarmed with them. A red cockade or a red band on the hat was required of all civilians, who in addition had to doff their hats to officers.<sup>18</sup> Sentry boxes were everywhere, and after nine o’clock at night, no one could pass without a countersign. One evening a well-known young man of the village when challenged by a sentry became confused and ran off across the fields. He was seized and sentenced to be

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<sup>14</sup> Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117, October 21, 1776.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>18</sup> “The British officers expected the utmost condescension. If a farmer, in passing, should neglect to take off his hat, he might depend on a caning; though the Briton would scarcely deign to notice him, much less return the civility. In addressing an officer your hat should be under your arm.” *Ibid.*, p. 252.

flogged. Accordingly he was tied to a locust tree in front of Raynham Hall, just down the road from Samuel Fosdick's house; "but before he received the full measure of his punishment, the cries of the youth and the frantic appeals of his mother and sister so wrought on the people that by their interference he was set at liberty."<sup>19</sup>

It was this atmosphere of ruthlessness and brutality to which the citizens of Oyster Bay had to accustom themselves in the seven years of occupation by British and Hessian troops from 1776 to 1783. The Queen's Rangers under the notorious Colonel Simcoe were here in 1778, and it was at this time that the village was heavily fortified. A square redoubt was built on the hill behind what is now West Main Street, and every section of the Town Spot was "loopholed and surrounded with abbatis in such a manner that it could not be forced."<sup>20</sup> The villagers lived inside the line of fortification, and could leave only by permission.

But to the citizens of Oyster Bay it was the Hessians, quartered here in the winter of 1782 and 1783, who typified the heel of the conqueror. "They were an ill-favored set of little men," says the local record, "the gleanings of the German recruits. . . . They were filthy and lazy, sometimes corrupting the children with their vile language and manners. . . . They ripped boards out of the Episcopal church to make berths and barracks, and others, following their example, took away piece after piece for firewood until the church blew down."<sup>21</sup>

It was not only the Hessians against whom complaint was made. All during the seven-year occupation of Oyster Bay, its inhabitants were exposed to the arrogance of British officers and the exactions of military need. The troops were frequently billeted on the inhabitants, and the days and nights were filled with the noise of their "brawls, drumming, fifeing and dancing, card and dice playing, with a large fire blazing away all night long, so that it behooved the farmer to keep his woodpile constantly replenished, or his rails and fences would be cut up."<sup>22</sup>

When the troops wanted boards for barracks or any other purpose, they took them wherever they could find them, and

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231. See also Onderdonk's *Queens County in Olden Times*.

<sup>22</sup> *Queens County in Olden Times*, p. 64.



the records of the time are full of the complaints of the citizens. But there was no redress; the excuse was military necessity. Such items as these appear:

Capt. McGill took off from David Conklin's barn 50 boards. They were carried to Oyster Bay to construct soldiers' barracks.

From Stephen Kelsey's barn 95 almost new white pine boards were ripped off. These Kelsey was forced to cart to Oyster Bay himself.<sup>23</sup>

The impressment of horses was another item of constant complaint. "No matter how urgent your business, whether ploughing, going to mill, on a visit, at church, or at a funeral, the team must go."<sup>24</sup> In addition there were robberies and shootings and all the unhappy incidents that occur when armed forces are quartered on a civilian population. And Oyster Bay, let us remember, had seven years of it.

But in the minds of the citizens of Queens County, British and Hessian troops were almost incidental nuisances compared with the mounting depredations of the whaleboat men. The whaleboat men were Americans, many of them refugees from Long Island, who had received commissions from the Governors of New York and Connecticut to patrol Long Island Sound against British vessels. As the war developed it required no great stretch of conscience for these men to land on the north shore of Long Island and plunder loyalist homes under pretense of carrying off British goods. This type of action at length degenerated into wholesale robbery of Whigs and Loyalists alike. In the latter years of the war, the menace increased, and the whole north shore was in a state of terror. Men with their faces blacked stole across the Sound at night, and the record of the period is an uninterrupted story of beatings, tortures, and hangings to extract money from the wretched householders, friends and foes alike. Many of the robbers, having lived on Long Island, were familiar with every cove and channel and with every likely victim on the shore. Not a few of them were known personally by the people whose goods they plundered. By 1783, under the guise of war, mobs of reckless men, caring only for loot, were robbing everyone who had anything left to take. In the minds of many of the inhabitants

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<sup>23</sup> Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents* (2nd Series, 1884), p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Revolutionary Incidents* (1846), p. 209.

it was better to have the protection of troops billeted in their homes—even Hessians—than to be exposed to the ruthless cruelty of the whaleboat men.

It must not be supposed, of course, that the British and their associated loyalists were guiltless of similar depredations on the Connecticut shore. For example, one Sunday, fifty men, including the minister, were taken prisoners while attending church at Darien. Brought to Oyster Bay, they were heavily ironed and sent to New York.<sup>25</sup> It was a cruel and purposeless gesture—the kind of gesture that characterizes a civil war when hatred has the upper hand.

It was on this note that the war gradually ended. The long lines of British ships evacuating those Loyalists who did not dare remain were making their way out of the mouth of New York harbor or eastward through the Sound. Meanwhile, the victorious Whigs, exiled for seven years, were returning homeward to Queens County. Once more the tables were turned, and once more revenge was in the air. A notice in a New York newspaper six days after the evacuation of the British, addressed to “Messieurs Tories,” stated that “after a storm comes a calm,” but added: “The Whigs take the liberty to prognosticate that the calm, which the enemies of Columbia at present enjoy, will ere long be succeeded by a bitter and neck-breaking hurricane.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Bernice Schultz, *Colonial Hempstead* (1937), p. 350.



## CHAPTER XIV

### REVOLUTION AND AFTERMATH

**D**URING this long, drawn-out agony of seven years which we have been reviewing, what was happening to the Fosdick family? As we have already noted, for the first eight months of 1776—up until the Battle of Long Island on August 27th—Samuel Fosdick was outlawed by the Continental Congress; and probably, with scores of his fellow citizens, he was in hiding, while Colonel Heard, and later the Minute Men, searched the swamps and morasses around Oyster Bay. It was during this period, in April of 1776, that Samuel's youngest child, Solomon, was born; and it speaks for the courage and indomitability of his mother that apparently alone of all her nine children she had him christened by the Reverend Leonard Cutting in the Episcopal Church, which itself was outlawed.

During the British occupation of Long Island, except for three or four of the older children, the Fosdick family stayed in Oyster Bay. On that point there can be no doubt. Samuel undoubtedly continued his business as a blacksmith, and it is highly probable that he was occasionally employed by the British forces. His house and his blacksmith shop were located in the village and were thus within the enclosure of the British fortifications of 1778. Consequently his life and work were in the center of British military activity.

That he had contact with British officers we know from at least one incident. In 1780, his son Morris, then ten years of age, while carrying a sharp ax for trimming apple trees, slipped and fell, severing his left hand at the wrist. He was attended by British army surgeons, and his younger brother Solomon remembered in later years how they used to take off their swords and place them upon the bed while they dressed the wound. On one occasion they were highly displeased because a gun was fired near the house, causing the patient to start violently. Whenever the surgeons came on their visits, Solomon, who was then about five years old, and his sister Deborah, who was seven, used to hide themselves through fear of the formidable looking officers.

However, the family was not immune from molestation, particularly at the hands of army stragglers and the whaleboat men. Family tradition recalls that Samuel, being a blacksmith, fortified the doors and windows of his house with iron bars. But even so there were unpleasant incidents which his grandchildren heard from their parents and repeated around the fireside to *their* children. Once a Hessian soldier tried to steal the poultry. Only the younger children were at home with their mother. Taking an ax, she stood between the soldier and her hens, threatening to use it if he advanced another foot. Even Teutonic stubbornness saw the unwisdom of tangling with that ball of Celtic fury.

Another story relates to Gunner—the famous family dog during the Revolution, who later went with father and children to Dutchess County—the dog after whom generations of other dogs were named by the Fosdick family. Mary Fosdick and her two youngest children, Deborah and Solomon, were alone in the house at night. There was a knock at the door. “Samuel, is that you?” she said. No answer and another knock. She repeated the question, and a surly voice replied: “Open the door or I’ll stave it down.” Going to another door, with the dog at her side, she told Gunner to take him. There was a sound of running feet and a man’s scream as Gunner grappled with him. Rushing out she discovered that the dog had the man by the throat. The man was badly hurt and she dragged him into the entry, turning him over to the authorities the next morning.<sup>1</sup>

Like many families, not only in Queens County but in all the colonies, the Fosdick family was split asunder by the issues of the Revolution. On November 1st, 1776, Samuel Fosdick, Jr., Samuel III’s second son, only sixteen years old, enlisted as a private in the Second New York Line Regiment, commanded by Colonel Henry B. Livingston. This was a critical time in the fortunes of the Continental Army, for Washington, having lost New York City, was being pushed by the British from White Plains. The disaster of Fort Mifflin lay just ahead. Three weeks after he joined the Second Regiment, it was merged with the Fourth Regiment, and Samuel, Jr., “enlisted

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<sup>1</sup> See Lewis Fosdick’s genealogy.



in the new establishment for three years and during the war.”<sup>2</sup> The date of his enlistment would seem to indicate that at the time he was not living in Oyster Bay, for by then the British were in control of the village. It is possible that he was living with his older half brother, Silas, in Dutchess County, New York; for there is evidence that some of the recruits for these regiments were gathered from that area. During the latter part of 1776 and early in 1777 the Fourth Regiment appears to have been engaged in guarding the passes of the Hudson River around Peekskill; later in the year it headed north to join Gates’ forces against Burgoyne. It participated in the Battle of Saratoga and spent the following winter at Valley Forge.<sup>3</sup>

Two muster-rolls are on record for this regiment during this time. The first, from “Camp near Louden’s Ferry” (on the Hudson), covers the period November 21, 1776, to September 5, 1777. The muster-roll, dated September 5, shows that at the moment Samuel Fosdick was “on command,” i.e., detailed to special service. The second muster-roll, from the “Camp at Valley Forge,” covers the period September 1, 1777, to January 1, 1778, and has this somewhat startling comment on Samuel Fosdick: “Deserted October 6, 1777.”<sup>4</sup> This was the day before the second battle of Saratoga. The same comment is appended to the names of a surprisingly large number of his colleagues.

In *New York in the Revolution*, the official compilation of the State’s Revolutionary soldiers, this observation appears: “‘Deserter,’ written after a name in the original documents, must not be taken too seriously. Frequently a man absented himself to gather crops, to attend a sick wife, or to bury a child. . . .<sup>5</sup> The term ‘absent’ would more correctly describe the real conduct of many of the soldiers.”<sup>6</sup>

We have to remember that Samuel Fosdick, Jr., was a sixteen-year-old boy. What pressures he was under, or what influences of homesickness or illness motivated his action, we cannot even

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<sup>2</sup> The record is in the Military Register in the National Archives in Washington. For this three-week period of service Samuel was paid £1 15s. 6-2/3d.

<sup>3</sup> *The American Revolution in New York* (published by the University of the State of New York, 1926), p. 136.

<sup>4</sup> Military Register, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

<sup>5</sup> Compiled by James A. Roberts, Comptroller (2nd Edition; Albany: 1898), p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Supplement (1901), p. 20.

guess. Whether he later rejoined his regiment the records unfortunately do not disclose.<sup>7</sup>

While Samuel, Jr.'s, interests were enlisted on the American side, his next younger brother, Nathaniel, succumbed to British pressure at Oyster Bay and joined up with the loyalist armed forces.<sup>8</sup> From the time of their arrival on Long Island the British had used every inducement of bounty, pay, clothing, and provision to supplement their own troops with American personnel. The organization that Nathaniel Fosdick joined late in 1780, when he was 18 years old, appears to have been the 3rd Battalion of the Associated Loyalists. This battalion was located chiefly at Lloyd's Neck, thirteen miles northeast of Oyster Bay, with a separate company in the village. The inducements which the British held out were as follows:

1. Each enlisted man was to receive 200 acres of land "in North America" at the close of the war.
2. All captures made by them were to be their own property.
3. A skillful surgeon, with a complete medical chest, was to reside at Lloyd's Neck, and accompany the men on their "excursions."

In addition the corps was furnished with armed vessels, provisions, arms and ammunition, to defend the post and "carry on enterprises against the rebels."<sup>9</sup> The members of the corps left an unhappy memory behind them. "They went on excursions for forage, and in pursuit of rebels, to most parts of Suffolk County, and sometimes they crossed the Sound on plundering expeditions."<sup>10</sup> When the war closed, they were evacuated by British ships, with many other loyalists, and taken to Nova Scotia. Here Nathaniel Fosdick received the 200 acres of land which had been promised him. He was particularly devoted to his mother, and it is said that on one occasion, escaping from the garrison at Lloyd's Neck to see her, he killed a Hessian soldier who attempted to stop him.<sup>11</sup> Just before he sailed for Nova Scotia, his mother went aboard the ship—whether at Oyster Bay or New York is not known—and tried to persuade

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<sup>7</sup> Later in his life Samuel Fosdick, Jr., became a prominent leader in the Quaker church. See Lewis Fosdick's genealogy.

<sup>8</sup> This is amply substantiated by family records.

<sup>9</sup> Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County* (1846), pp. 219-220.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Fosdick: genealogy. Also Lewis Fosdick to the author.



him not to go. But he foresaw the wrath of the returning Whigs; and he was unwilling to give up the reward of the 200 acres. So he persisted, and it was a matter of lifelong regret that he never saw his mother again. Fifty-two years later, while visiting his younger brother Solomon in Western New York, he recounted the incident with tears.<sup>12</sup>

What about the military record of Samuel Fosdick III—the father of this divided family? Family tradition strongly supports the idea that he served in some capacity in the Continental forces, and Lewis Fosdick in his genealogy makes the dogmatic but unsupported assertion that he was in the Continental service. Many of his descendants—including the author—have assumed this as a fact, and claims to membership in patriotic societies have been based on it. Specifically it has been stated that Samuel Fosdick served as a private in the Third New York Line Regiment.

Intensive investigation, extending over many years, seems to prove almost beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is no substantial basis for such a claim. In the first place, Samuel Fosdick III was 65 years old in 1775. A man of his age would scarcely enlist as a private in a line regiment. In the second place, Samuel had lived most of his life in the conservative environment of Queens County; in that environment he had carried on his trade. He was a member of the Church of England, and so were his first and second wives; and the influence of that church, at least on Long Island, was adamant against the forces of the Revolution. In the third place, Samuel voted in November, 1775, against sending delegates to the Provincial Congress, and in consequence was outlawed and proscribed by the Continental Congress. No evidence exists that he ever recanted from his original position, nor did he surrender his loyalty to the Church of England. In the fourth place, in 1776, after the Battle of Long Island, he signed the declaration of allegiance to King George, and he continued to live in Oyster Bay throughout the war, although many, if not most, of the Whigs joined the wave of immigration across the Sound to Connecticut.<sup>13</sup> It seems inconceivable that during any part of

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<sup>12</sup> Letter of Jesse T. Fosdick, son of Solomon, to William Fosdick Chamberlin, January 26, 1901. Also Jesse T. Fosdick to the author.

<sup>13</sup> See F. G. Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island*.

this period he could have been connected with the Continental forces.

To be sure, there was a Samuel Fosdick listed in the Second, Third and Fourth New York Line Regiments. As we have already seen, Samuel, Jr., enlisted in the Second Regiment which was absorbed in the Fourth. We are confronted, therefore, with this question: Who was the Samuel Fosdick in the Third Regiment? Whoever he was, he appears to have served only in 1775. The one muster-roll during the period in which he served—between June 28 and October 15, 1775—shows that the regiment was stationed at Lake George under Colonel James Clinton.<sup>14</sup> Two possibilities suggest themselves. Deacon Thomas Fosdick, Samuel III's uncle, had a son Samuel, who was born in 1757. He would have been eighteen years old in 1775. While his home apparently was in New London, Connecticut, he had close relatives in eastern Long Island, and he could have enlisted from New York. In fact, Colonel James Clinton reported to the Provincial Congress on July 21, 1775, that he had three captains recruiting on Long Island.<sup>15</sup> Another possibility, although it is suggested with some hesitation, is that the Samuel Fosdick of the Third Regiment was Samuel, Jr., who later joined the Second and Fourth Regiments. The difficulty is his age: he would have been barely fifteen. And yet late in 1776 a column of captured Americans provoked the laughter of the British because, as they said, "a great many of them were lads under fifteen."<sup>16</sup> It is at least conceivable that young Samuel, with youthful zeal, enlisted in the preliminary organization of the Third Regiment in 1775 and later shifted to the Second and Fourth Regiments.

One must consider, of course, the possibility that Samuel Fosdick III was a member of a militia company instead of one of the Continental regiments. Indeed, two months before the Battle of Long Island, attempts were made to organize four

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<sup>14</sup> Military Register, National Archives, Washington, D. C. The so-called Third Regiment at this period must have been some kind of preliminary organization. Provision for the First, Second, Third, and Fourth New York Line Regiments was made at a meeting of the Provincial Congress held June 30, 1775. Yet here is a muster-roll showing the Third Regiment already in existence on June 28th. The regiment in its final form does not seem to have been recruited until November, 1776.

<sup>15</sup> Journal of the Provincial Congress, p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington* (1951), Vol. IV, p. 237.



such companies in Oyster Bay.<sup>17</sup> The attempts were only partially successful, and whether these particular companies, or any portion of them, participated in the battle is not known. The fact that Samuel III's name does not appear in connection with any militia company is not necessarily decisive, for the records are incomplete and far from adequate. What does seem decisive, however, is the pattern and character of his life during all the long period of the Revolution.

One disregards family traditions with reluctance. It should be said, however, that when Lewis Fosdick undertook his genealogy of the family, he relied primarily on the descendants of two sons of Samuel III: Morris and Solomon. Morris was only five years old in 1775, and Solomon was not born until the following year. Consequently they had very limited personal recollection of the events of the Revolution. It is not, therefore, difficult to understand how, with the passage of years, Samuel Fosdick, whose memory was revered by his children, should come to be identified with an increasingly popular cause.

The close of the war in 1783 found Oyster Bay at a low point. The seven years of occupation had sapped its population of vitality and hope. Across the countryside farms lay sacked and burned; the great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep on the Hempstead plains had disappeared; the forests were a welter of raw stumps; normal trade had dried up; and the people were numbed by the destruction of every sane purpose for making a living or developing the land.

On top of this was the hostility of the returning Americans and the mounting fury with which the property of the loyalists was confiscated. The inhabitants of Queens County who had remained within the British lines during the war were lumped together in a punitive tax measure of £14,000.<sup>18</sup>

Apparently during this chaotic period Samuel Fosdick lost his home and thereafter for a year or two he lived on the Norse Wright property.<sup>19</sup> The family situation seems to have been desperate. The tradition which Lewis Fosdick cites that the misfortune was due to Samuel's "too great confidence in Con-

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<sup>17</sup> Onderdonk, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> Onderdonk, *op. cit.*, p. 259 (May 28, 1784.)

<sup>19</sup> Family record. The location of the Norse Wright property cannot now be determined.

tinental money, in which money he was paid when he sold his farm" appears to have no basis in fact, for Continental money was not legal tender on Long Island during its occupation by the British, nor is there any record of his having sold his farm at all. How he lost it, whether by confiscation or otherwise, we do not know. The property was referred to in 1785 as "the land some time since belonging to Samuel Fosdick."<sup>20</sup>

During this bitter period the resoluteness and courage of Samuel's wife, Mary, seems to have been the chief factor in holding the family together. At least this is the strong tradition that has been handed down through the generations. Her death, therefore, in 1786 was the final blow; after that there seemed to be nothing left. They apparently buried her in the Episcopalian church yard, although the church itself was falling down, and there had been no rector for two years. Samuel Fosdick was now 76 years old, and he had five children dependent on him: Solomon, aged 10; Deborah, 12 (named after his first wife); Thomas, 14; Morris, 16; and Rebecca, 18.<sup>21</sup> They had been watched over and cherished by their mother until her death—guarded through catastrophic years with spirited devotion. Now that she was gone, Oyster Bay as a home seemed no longer possible. Perhaps Samuel was too old to continue his trade as a blacksmith; perhaps the rising tide of the new order made life too difficult. In any event, a desperate decision was arrived at. With his five children he moved to the farm of his oldest son, Silas, in Nine Partners, Dutchess County, New York. Whether it was on his own initiative, or whether it came as the result of a suggestion by his son, we do not know. His remaining effects and personal property he took with him and gave them to Silas, with the understanding that his children should be brought up as members of his son's family and that he himself should be taken care of during his lifetime.

It must have been a forlorn expedition that set out for Nine Partners some time in 1786. Years later it seemed to haunt the memories of the children. They doubtless crossed the Sound

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<sup>20</sup> Description of boundaries in a deed: Desbrosses to Butler, Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, p. 706.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel's older children had already established themselves. Samuel, Jr. had gone to Cossackie and married there in 1786. Nathaniel was in Nova Scotia. Anna had recently married and moved to Flushing, Long Island. Prudence was married that year, 1786, and lived in Glenville, north of Schenectady.



by boat from Oyster Bay to Mamaroneck and then took the old road through White Plains, Bedford, Carmel, and Kent. Perhaps they had a few cattle, and their goods, such as they were, were probably pulled in a horse cart. With the exception of two items we do not know what they took with them. One of the items was Samuel's musket, of which not even Colonel Heard and all his men had been able to deprive him. The other was a tomahawk which years before an Indian had left at the blacksmith shop to be mended. Of all Samuel's possessions these alone survive today.<sup>22</sup>

Silas had left Oyster Bay some time before the Revolution, and his sister Sarah seems to have accompanied him. He was thirty-three years old in 1786 when his father and five half-brothers and sisters came to live with him. He had been married five years and had two children of his own: a baby, born that year, and a four-year-old boy. Under the best of circumstances, the new arrangement could scarcely have been a happy one. Silas' farm on Salt Creek had limited accommodations, and as one sees it today, with its scanty acres and mediocre soil, the wonder grows that anybody could have hoped that it would support so large a family.<sup>23</sup> Certainly in the memory of Samuel's children, and particularly of Solomon, the years that followed were lonesome and bleak. As fast as they could they struck out for themselves. In 1788 Morris took a position as a teacher at Hamburg on the Hudson. About the same time Rebecca appears to have gone out to work, perhaps in the vicinity. How

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<sup>22</sup> Both these items are now owned by the author. The musket is a Queen's arm, noted in its day for its great range and accuracy. The tomahawk has the date 1769 stamped on it, and twenty-one indented dots on the side, supposed to represent the number of scalps taken by its Indian owner. These two items were given by Samuel to Silas, and by Silas to his younger half brother Solomon; and they have been handed down through that branch of the family.

<sup>23</sup> Silas' farm lay on both sides of the road that now runs between Salt Point and Clinton Hollow, about one and a half miles from the latter place. It comprised part of what has since been known as the Fleming farm. The north line of Silas' property is today marked by a stone fence running at right angles to the road, south of the present Westmiller house. The south line is a similar fence about a half a mile south. The farm extended from beyond Salt Creek on the west to the top of the hill on the east. The present road that bisects the farm was probably not there in Silas' day, and the entrance to his property was from the top of the hill. Except for a new bungalow, there are now no buildings on the place—not even a cellar hole to mark their former location. In the recollections of older inhabitants, the barn was standing about 50 years

ago.

long Thomas and Solomon remained at Nine Partners is not known, but it was probably only a few years. The story of the tragedy of Deborah, the youngest daughter, was told around the firesides of the family for two generations. Seventy-five years ago Lewis Fosdick copied down the tradition in these words: "She was amiable, kind-hearted, self-sacrificing and faithful to duty. The circumstances of her life were pathetic. Tenderly cared for and delicately reared as a child, left motherless at the age of twelve, her home broken up while still a child, the hardships of the times compelling her employment among comparative strangers, she early succumbed to the tasks she was called upon to meet, though kindly treated and provided for by those with whom she had her home."<sup>24</sup>

Her death occurred perhaps around 1791, although the date is unrecorded.<sup>25</sup> Five of her brothers and sisters named children after her, and the name has been carried down to this day. Solomon, whose devoted companion she was during their childhood, recalled her with sorrow and deep affection even after fifty years.<sup>26</sup>

Samuel Fosdick himself died on Silas' farm in 1792, aged 82. The family record speaks of his death as "sudden" and of his "having worked in the harvest field the day before."<sup>27</sup> Perhaps at the very end shadowy memories of his long life floated before his fading mind—memories of those frightened and half-forgotten days when his father stood in the pillory on Meeting-house Hill in New London, of Sconce Point with the Charles River flowing by, of the blacksmith shop at Oyster Bay, of Deborah, his first love, of Mary with her black eyes and hair, of Colonel Heard's troops with fife and drum marching over the frozen, rutted roads of Long Island, of roistering Hessian soldiers, of the heartbreaking trip to Nine Partners, of another and later Deborah, so recently dead, now sleeping under the grass at the top of the hill.

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<sup>24</sup> Genealogy, p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> Silas Fosdick's family Bible, containing the records of his father, Samuel, was destroyed in the burning of his daughter's house in 1865.

<sup>26</sup> Jesse T. Fosdick (son of Solomon) to the author.

<sup>27</sup> Lewis Fosdick, *op. cit.*, p. 63. In accordance with the custom of the community, Samuel was probably buried on Silas' farm, perhaps with a rough headstone. If so, the headstone was long ago ploughed under and the site of the grave forgotten.



*The Children of Samuel Fosdick III\***By Deborah Shadbolt*

- (1) Silas, born April 30, 1753.
- (2) Morris Fosdick, born 1755; died about 1760.
- (3) Sarah Fosdick, born July 16, 1757.

*By Mary Wright*

- (4) Samuel Fosdick, born December, 1760.
- (5) Nathaniel Fosdick, born 1762.
- (6) Anna Fosdick, born 1764.
- (7) Prudence Fosdick, born February 22, 1766.
- (8) Rebecca Fosdick, born 1768.
- (9) Morris Fosdick, born November 21, 1770.
- (10) Thomas Fosdick, born 1772.
- (11) Deborah Fosdick, born 1774.
- (12) *Solomon Fosdick*, born April 8, 1776, the next lineal ancestor.

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• For details see Appendix V.

## CHAPTER XV

### SOLOMON FOSDICK

**A**LTHOUGH a wandering life led him to faraway places, Solomon Fosdick never could forget his first ten years at Oyster Bay. It was here that he acquired a lasting hatred of the British. It was here, too, that he lived with his mother as a constant companion. To the hour he died, his mother was a vivid memory which he shared with his children. He used to tell them of her daring and courage—how, one day, when walking with Deborah and himself along the Sound, she saw a swimmer, seized with a cramp, suddenly sink. Plunging without hesitation into the water, she brought him to shore. Solomon never again lived in Oyster Bay, but to him—so his children reported—it was always home.

Indeed, he never appears to have found any other place which seemed to him to be home, unless, perhaps, it was his last residence in the Boston Valley in Western New York. And he was forty-three years old when he reached there. Until then he seems to have been pursued by the same spirit of restlessness which characterized his grandfather. He obviously found it hard to settle down. A descendant described Solomon and the other children of Samuel III in these words: "Remarkable for activity—never easy—always in motion."<sup>1</sup>

Solomon's early years are difficult to reconstruct. Born in 1776, leaving Oyster Bay for Nine Partners at the age of ten, he probably remained with his half brother Silas until after the death of his father in 1792. At that time he may have gone to stay with his older brother Samuel across the Hudson at Coxsackie. He was by trade a carpenter and joiner, and during this period he may have served an apprenticeship. But the family records also refer to him as a sailor and a farmer, and it seems probable that the hardships incident to self-support at an early age involved, for a period at least, such work as he could get.

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Fosdick—quoting, probably, his grandfather Morris Fosdick—p. 64.



Years later, he used to tell his children a story of a serious illness which overtook him at this time. Where he was we do not know, but it was before his marriage and he was left very much to himself, dangerously sick with a fever and without hope of recovery. In his despair he somehow got word to his sister Rebecca, of whom he was deeply fond, and she left her place of employment to nurse him. Lewis Fosdick continues the story in these words: "On seeing his condition she wept bitterly, and devotedly cared for him, with the result that he recovered, although the attending physician had pronounced it hopeless. . . . He always considered that he owed his life to her care."

How Solomon found time and opportunity to obtain an education is something of a mystery. However, he learned to read and write, and his penmanship shows the bold flourishes of his time. Later in life, perhaps due to the influence of his wife and his brother Morris, he seems to have been quite a reader. One of his early books, inscribed with his name and the date 1807, is in the author's possession.<sup>2</sup>

The first definite date relating to him which we can pin down is that of his marriage, in 1798, when he was twenty-two years old. Like his father before him, he chose an extraordinary woman as his wife—Anna Thorne, daughter of Stevenson Thorne and Prudence Merritt, the former a descendant of a long line of Quaker ancestors. Stevenson Thorne was the great-great-great-grandson of William Thorne, who in 1657 was the first man to sign the famous Flushing Remonstrance, a landmark in the struggle for religious liberty. Governor Peter Stuyvesant of New York had issued a proclamation forbidding anyone in the province to entertain a Quaker, even for a single night. The Remonstrance, addressed to Stuyvesant and signed by thirty citizens of Flushing, Long Island, read, in part, as follows:

You have been pleased to send up unto us a certain prohibition or command that we should not receive any of those people called Quakers because they are supposed to be by some, seducers of the people. For our part we cannot condemn them in this case, neither can wee stretch out our hands against them to punish, banish or persecute them. . . . Our desire is not to offend one

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<sup>2</sup> It is called *The Prompter: A Commentary on Common Sayings*, Anonymous (1793).

of His little ones, in whatsoever form, name or title hee appear in, whether Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist or Quaker, but shall be glad to see anything of God in any of them. . . .

Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us, wee cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egresse and regresse unto our town and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences.<sup>3</sup>

This was the spirit that ran in the blood of Stevenson Thorne and his daughter Anna as well. Prudence Merritt, Stevenson's wife, was herself an active figure in Quaker circles, and family tradition bears witness not only to her persuasive speaking in Quaker meeting but to her serviceable life among her neighbors.

Stevenson Thorne lived in North Castle, Westchester County, New York,<sup>4</sup> and there his daughter Anna was born in 1777. In 1789 the Thornes moved from Westchester County up the Hudson to Coeyman's Patent on the west bank, and Stevenson died there four years later. Coeyman's Patent was not far from Cox-sackie where Samuel Fosdick, Solomon's older brother, was living. In 1786 Samuel had married Elizabeth Thorne, Anna Thorne's first cousin.<sup>5</sup> As Solomon, after 1792, seems to have spent some time with his brother Samuel, it was inevitable that he should become acquainted with Anna; and he married her on his birthday, April 8, 1798, at New Baltimore on Coeyman's Patent "at the house of Abraham Potts."<sup>6</sup>

We know that Solomon was tall and strong, with the black hair and eyes of his mother. Anna, on the other hand, was short, slender—"a wisp of a thing"—sprightly and very active, with a complexion which one of her sons described as "English coloring." She had had a considerable education and was an omnivorous reader. In the words of one of her granddaugh-

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<sup>3</sup> The full text is given in a pamphlet by Haynes Trebor, published by the Bowne House Historical Society, Flushing, N. Y.

<sup>4</sup> Stevenson Thorne and Prudence Merritt were married in nearby Chappaqua September 15, 1763. On October 10, 1776, Stevenson was dismissed by the Quaker meeting of Purchase in North Castle—"disowned" is the official word used in the record. The offense is not stated, but the date may have some significance, as it is possible that Stevenson took some active part in the Revolution which displeased his Quaker associates. (Purchase M. M. Minutes.) There were apparently other cases of this type in other Quaker meetings. Stevenson is not recorded as having rejoined this particular meeting, but it seems likely that he joined another meeting.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Thorne was a daughter of Samuel Thorne, brother of Stevenson Thorne.

<sup>6</sup> Family record. It is possible that by 1798 Anna's mother had died and that she, like her husband, was an orphan.



ters, "she lived with Shakespeare and the Bible."<sup>7</sup> Where Solomon was genial and inclined, perhaps, to be happy-go-lucky, Anna was practical, intelligent, and deeply devout. Solomon, passionately loyal to the memory of his parents, adhered to their Episcopalian faith; Anna maintained her traditional ties with the Quakers. It was a harmonious combination which wore well with the years.

Shortly after their marriage, the twenty-two-year-old Solomon and his twenty-one-year-old bride moved to Newburgh on the west bank of the Hudson, approximately sixty miles south of Coxsackie. What considerations were involved in locating here we do not know. It was a growing village of considerable size which boasted a newspaper and a fire department. Here Solomon probably pursued his trade as a carpenter and joiner, although of this we cannot be certain. It was in Newburgh that his first two children were born, Samuel in 1799, and Angeline in 1801.

In 1803, the family moved to Rockaway in Queens County, New York, about twenty miles south of Oyster Bay, on the south shore of Long Island. This step was undoubtedly prompted by the fact that Solomon's brother Morris, to whom he was deeply attached, lived in Rockaway, where he taught school in the section now called Hewlett. Here Solomon and his family settled for five years in intimate relationship with his brother's family. Six years older than Solomon, Morris was genial in manner, talented and witty, tall, portly, and strong, with the black eyes and hair of his mother. There seems to have been a special bond between the two brothers, a strong tie of affection which lasted during their lives, although in later years they lived hundreds of miles apart.

In Rockaway Solomon carried on his carpenter's trade, and here his next three children were born: Prudence, Morris and Alice. Whether it was the responsibility of a growing family, or the restlessness which was one of his characteristics, he began to dream of the new lands in the West. The Revolution had crushed the power of the Iroquois Indians, and the route across New York State was now open. The Holland Land Company was beginning the development of vast areas in Western New

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<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Fosdick Frank to the author.

York and was offering acreage to settlers at attractive rates. In these new possibilities Solomon and his brother Morris were both interested, and in the spring of 1808 Morris started out on foot for Western New York to see for himself what the prospects were. Why Solomon did not accompany him is not known. Morris, whose accident in childhood had left him with only one hand, walked all the way from Long Island to Buffalo and back, travelling by way of Albany and central New York State. He returned with favorable accounts of what he had seen in the new territory, and he and Solomon concluded to move there with their families. At the last moment, however, Morris was offered a teaching position at Springfield on Long Island at so attractive a salary that he decided to accept it. Solomon and his family, therefore, started off alone, late in 1808. It was perhaps the last time the two brothers ever saw each other.

How Solomon and his family made the trip we do not know. Perhaps they went by a passenger sloop up the Hudson River to Albany. In any event, they got only as far as Amsterdam, on the Mohawk River, about thirty miles northwest of Troy. Why they stopped there and settled down for three years we cannot even guess. The village, which until a year before had been called Veddersburg, contained less than 150 inhabitants and was little better than a country crossroads. There were but three streets, sparsely settled, and no trade except by barter. A school of sorts had been started, and there was a Presbyterian church, generally without a minister.<sup>8</sup> Whether Solomon farmed or continued his trade as a carpenter, or both, is not known. His sixth child, Elizabeth, was born while he lived there.

In 1811 he made another move; but instead of continuing on his way to Western New York he back-tracked to Rensselaerville, in the Helderberg Mountains twenty-four miles southwest of Albany and about the same distance from Coxsackie, where his brother Samuel lived. The reason for this shift is perhaps understandable. The patroon of the vast Van Rensselaer holdings, Stephen Van Rensselaer, was offering to each settler the free use of 160 acres for seven years, and thereafter, if the set-

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<sup>8</sup> Centennial Number, *Amsterdam Evening Recorder*, 1910.



tlar chose to retain it, a perpetual lease or so-called grant-in-fee, subject to the payment annually of 22½ bushels of wheat, a day's service with a team, and four fat fowls. Mines, minerals, and water rights were strictly reserved for the use of the patroon. The land, heavily timbered, was stony, hilly and forbidding, scarcely adapted to profitable farming.

The apparent liberality of the terms, however, together with the glib assurance of Van Rensselaer's agents, attracted a sizeable population, and Rensselaerville, in the valley of the Ten Mile Creek, became a thriving little village, with Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches, a Quaker meeting, a school that was better than average and a tannery which represented the community's chief industry.<sup>9</sup>

Here Solomon and his family settled down in 1811, and here they remained for eight years. It was the flowering period of Rensselaerville. Ephraim Russ, one of the outstanding architects of his time, was designing and building houses which even today make this tiny village a place of unique beauty and charm. Solomon undoubtedly, for a time at least, found ample scope for his carpenter's trade, and it is probable that he carried on farming operations on his 160-acre allotment or whatever fraction of an allotment he had acquired.<sup>10</sup> Here his last three children were born, Mary, John Spencer, and Jesse. Here undoubtedly the older children went to school, although the absence of school records makes it impossible to determine the date.<sup>11</sup> We know that during Solomon's residence here—in 1816 to be exact—two grandchildren of his half brother Silas attended school at Westerlo, then called Chesterville, within the township of Rensselaerville. Whether they lived with Solo-

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<sup>9</sup> Harriet Jenkins Washbon, *Reminiscences of the History of Rensselaerville* (1873). Also Mary Fisher Torrance, *Old Rensselaerville* (1939).

<sup>10</sup> In spite of extensive research, it has proved impossible to determine the location of Solomon's land. Whether it was in or near the village of Rensselaerville, or somewhere within the township of the same name, is not known. Years later, Solomon's son Morris, writing to his younger brother Jesse, referred to Westerlo, a village six miles from the village of Rensselaerville, as being "within a few miles of the place of your birth." (Undated letter, in possession of the author.)

<sup>11</sup> The author owns the so-called "copy book" of Samuel Fosdick, Solomon's oldest son—the kind of book in which the children of that generation, and of later generations, too, practiced their penmanship. It is an amazing example of skillfully executed handwriting, almost like copperplate engraving—and all of it done with a quill pen.

mon at the time we can only surmise.<sup>12</sup> We know, too, that during this period Solomon had as an apprentice in his carpenter business a nephew, Thomas Fosdick, son of the Nathaniel who had gone to Nova Scotia after the Revolution. Doubtless, also, Solomon kept in close touch with his brother Samuel in nearby Coxsackie and with Samuel's growing family. All of that family—parents as well as children—were warm supporters of the Quaker faith; and Solomon's wife, Anna, probably derived genuine satisfaction from her contacts with them.

The War of 1812 broke out while Solomon was living in Rensselaerville, and it seems to have stirred the smoldering anti-British memories of his years at Oyster Bay. He clipped from pamphlets and newspapers a collection of patriotic songs and verses which were then current and treasured them until his death. His son Morris saved them and they are in existence today.<sup>13</sup> The following verse is illustrative of their content:

No more of your blathering nonsense  
'Bout the Nelsons of Old Johnny Bull.  
I'll sing you a song, by my conscience,  
Of Jones, Decatur and Hull.

In politics Solomon was an ardent follower of Jefferson, and later he shared with the underprivileged of his generation a passionate belief in Andrew Jackson.

On the surface, certainly, it seems to have been a happy life that the Fosdick family led at Rensselaerville. At least Solomon's older children, particularly Samuel and Morris, always looked back on it with a feeling of nostalgia. We can only guess why, after eight years, it came to an end. Van Rensselaer's grants-in-fee proved to be misleading and deceptive. The fine print in the leases which the eager settlers had not bothered to read gave the patroon rights and privileges which became increasingly onerous. The provision of four fat fowls a year, if unenforced by some agents, could suddenly take away a man's whole flock at the dictation of an energetic official; and if a settler wanted to sell his farm, with all the improvements he

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<sup>12</sup> "Teacher's Ledger," now in possession of Mrs. James Rider, of Rensselaerville. The grandchildren were Hiram and John, sons of Isaac Fosdick, Silas' oldest son. All three came to tragic ends: Isaac was killed when his horse ran over a precipice; Hiram died shortly after leaving school; and John was killed by a train. (Family records.)

<sup>13</sup> In the possession of the author.



had made on it, he had to turn over to the patroon from a quarter to a third of the sum he received. Meanwhile the old common law remedies of "distress" and "eviction" for non-payment of rent remained in full force. It was a feudal relationship which in time became so odious that it led to the violent Anti-Rent War of the eighteen forties.

Long before that date, however, the exodus from Rensselaerville had begun. There could be no future there for a man with a family of sons; and once more to Solomon, who seems to have been in difficult financial circumstances, came the dream of western lands—a dream which he and his brother Morris had shared eleven years before.

The decision, particularly for a man of Solomon's restless spirit, could point only in one direction. In 1819, while Anna was still nursing her last child, the family started out in a covered wagon for the Eldorado of Western New York—Solomon and Anna, and their nine children, ranging from Samuel who was twenty years old to Jesse who had been born in April of that year.<sup>14</sup> They probably followed the route generally taken by the pioneers of those days—through the Mohawk valley, and then by way of Utica, Canandaigua, Avon, and Batavia, to Buffalo. Solomon and his sons Samuel and Morris walked the whole distance, Samuel striding ahead carrying the musket of his grandfather, Samuel III. Anna with her five daughters and her two infant sons rode in the wagon, which, in addition to its passengers, carried everything in the way of possessions which the family owned. Tradition varies as to the time that was taken to make the trip to Buffalo—from three weeks to eight weeks. If oxen were used instead of horses, a longer period would have been necessary.

There was undoubtedly a mood of excitement that surrounded the trip—a feeling of high expectancy—quite different from the spirit of that earlier journey, thirty-three years before, when Solomon with his father, brothers, and sisters, had set out from Oyster Bay for Nine Partners. Then, as now, the family carried with them all that they owned, which was probably very little. But this time they left no torturing memories behind them; this time promise and adventure beckoned them—a summons which Solomon always found difficult to resist.

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<sup>14</sup> The ages of the other children were as follows: Angeline, 18; Prudence, 16; Morris, 15; Alice, 12; Elizabeth, 10; Mary, 8; John Spencer, 2.

Except for a few items, we do not know what the covered wagon carried. There were at least three books—the Bible, the English Book of Common Prayer, and a complete Shakespeare in one volume of fine print. There was also Samuel III's musket—and the tomahawk. Solomon had a watch given to him by his sister Prudence in 1792, when he was sixteen years old;<sup>15</sup> and Anna had some gold beads which her brother-in-law Morris had presented to her as a bride. Treasuring these meager possessions, the family pushed toward the West.

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<sup>15</sup> The watch was apparently in Nathaniel's hands for some years, and he may have had it with him in Nova Scotia. It is now in the author's possession.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SOLOMON FOSDICK IN THE BOSTON VALLEY

ACCORDING to family tradition, Solomon and the covered wagon stopped briefly at Buffalo. Buffalo in 1819 was a sorry little settlement which five years before had been burned by the British in the War of 1812. It was barely more than a collection of rude cabins scattered along Buffalo Creek and out the main street leading east to Batavia. Whether Solomon had any thought of settling there seems doubtful. A local historian makes this comment: "So little confidence had he [Solomon] in its future that when he was offered land extending from where the Elk Street market now stands, south to the river, to cancel a small bill for carpenter work, he preferred the cash."<sup>1</sup>

In any event, Solomon headed for the Boston Valley, twenty-two miles southeast of Buffalo, reaching that destination apparently late in 1819. And there he settled down for the balance of his life. Why he chose the Boston Valley it is not easy to determine. Boston was a tiny settlement on the banks of the Eighteen Mile Creek, with a population of perhaps two dozen families living in log cabins. It was covered with a dense forest which had to be cleared and fenced before any crops could be sown. There may have been a school of sorts, probably held in a barn, but it is doubtful whether there was a church.<sup>2</sup> On all sides of the settlement stretched the vast wilderness of unbroken forest.

The only clue that we have on Solomon's choice of Boston lies in the fact that former residents of Rensselaerville, or relatives of former residents, may already have settled there. The family names Hatch and Alger were prominent in Rensselaerville, and families of that name had established themselves in Boston by 1819. Indeed the Fosdicks were soon connected by

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<sup>1</sup> Truman C. White, *Our County and Its People* (1898), p. 580.

<sup>2</sup> Church meetings, however, were held once a month in the homes of the settlers by the Presbyterian Society under the leadership of a remarkable missionary, John Spencer. His parish covered the entire holdings of the Holland Land Company.

marriage with both these families. Prudence Fosdick married Joseph Alger in 1821, and Joseph's sister Margaret married Edward Hatch.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it is probable that Samuel Fosdick, Solomon's twenty-year-old son, had made the trip to Western New York before 1819 to report on the advisability and place of a settlement.<sup>4</sup> In that case he might easily have followed the trails or the advice of former friends and acquaintances in Rensselaerville, with the result that Solomon's family had the Boston Valley in mind as a destination when the covered wagon started on its way.

That first winter of 1819-1820 in Boston was probably as difficult a period as any which the family had ever faced, or was ever again to face. Solomon's first home appears to have been a log cabin "on a place owned by Aaron Adams."<sup>5</sup> It was probably located on the east side of the main road, a little north of its present intersection with Colden Road.<sup>6</sup> Living in a log cabin with nine children could not have been, even under the happiest circumstances, an easy arrangement. Seldom did these cabins have more than one room; a half-garret, reached by a ladder, provided extra sleeping accommodations, but the situation at best was crowded and crude. In this place, or later, perhaps, in another cabin across the road, the family seems to have lived for a year or more. In 1822, however, Solomon built a frame house on a 25-acre plot, high on the west hill overlooking the Boston Valley, just across the line of Concord Township—a house which is still standing.<sup>7</sup> He obviously purchased the property from the Holland Land Company, although diligent

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<sup>3</sup> In 1823 Serril Alger, Joseph's father, built a double house for his two children, Joseph and Margaret. It was one of the first frame houses erected in Boston, and it is still standing, occupied today by Mrs. Earl Dye, a great-granddaughter of Joseph Alger. The Algers may have come from Nelson, in Madison County, New York, and earlier, perhaps from Pownal, Vermont. Edward Hatch was a son of Bogardus Hatch, who apparently lived at one time in New Lebanon, N. Y.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Fosdick Frank, Samuel's niece, to the author.

<sup>5</sup> Erasmus Briggs, *History of the Original Town of Concord* (1883), p. 356.

<sup>6</sup> The main road, running from Hamburg to Springville is today Route 219. Serril Alger's cabin stood on the east side of the main road, just south of Colden Road. Samuel Fosdick, Solomon's oldest son, purchased three acres from Serril Alger in 1826. This land was located directly across the road from Alger's cabin. (Land Records, County Court House, Buffalo, Vol. 43, p. 377.)

<sup>7</sup> The house, on what is now Trevett Road, is today occupied by Alancin Pattison, who bought it in 1939 from Julius F. Meyer. (County Clerk's records—Buffalo, Vol. 2850, p. 435.) Solomon's original barn was torn down about 1900 and a new one erected on the same site from the old materials.



research has failed to disclose any record of it.<sup>8</sup> Here, in this small but relatively comfortable house, with its huge hand-hewn beams, he lived until his death; and this is the place to which constant reference is made in various family records as the "homestead."

It was a house on the edge of a wilderness, and there is a sense in which the Fosdick family in America had come full cycle in its peregrinations. Here in the Boston Valley, in the midst of the forest, menaced by bears and wolves and an occasional marauding Indian, Solomon raised his family under conditions strikingly similar to those which had confronted his great-great-great-grandfather, Stephen Fosdick, when he brought his wife and eight children across the Atlantic 180 years before. Indeed Solomon could have stepped back into Stephen's life, or Stephen could have moved forward into Solomon's life, with little sense of strangeness or need of adjustment. Solomon's Episcopalianism and his Quaker wife probably would have troubled Stephen, but both men were carpenters, and Solomon's tools and household utensils, as well as the problems created by the environment of endless forest, would have been completely familiar to his grandsire of five generations before.

Although Solomon could easily have walked back across those five generations, he could not have gone forward a single generation without bewilderment, while the generation of his grandson or his great-grandson would have frightened him far more than did the bear he killed with a fence-rail back of his log cabin. For after all, he knew something about bears; but he never saw a railroad train,<sup>9</sup> nor dreamed of such a thing as an electric light. Nothing swifter than a horse was known to him or to the sleeping generations which had preceded him. The tallow candle which lit the room the night he died had flickered through countless rooms where his ancestors had died.

Solomon's life in Boston followed the now familiar pattern of carpenter and farmer. The village was entering a short era of development, and frame houses began slowly to replace the

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<sup>8</sup> The plot is listed on the maps of the Holland Land Company as "Township 8, range 7, northeast corner of lot 24." This is the same plot, as we shall see, which was subsequently purchased by Solomon's son, John Spencer Fosdick.

<sup>9</sup> Railroads did not reach Western New York until 1851, thirteen years after Solomon's death.

log cabins of the earlier period. There was little money in the settlement, and trade was by barter of commodities and services. The only cash "crop" was potash, or "black salts," formed from the wood ashes of burned trees. As a trained carpenter, Solomon's services were probably in demand, and it is interesting to note that he taught his trade to three of his sons: Samuel, John Spencer, and Jesse. He and his son John Spencer built the church of the Presbyterian Society in Boston in 1837,<sup>10</sup> and he appears to have worked on the building of the Free Will Baptist Church in 1832.<sup>11</sup> We know that he built the Alger house in 1823, and doubtless in the two decades of his residence in the Boston Valley he worked on many buildings in the villages around his home.

But it was a hard life, and Solomon's affairs never seemed to prosper. Years later one of his younger children spoke of this period as the struggle against poverty, and it is obvious that as a family they barely succeeded in getting by. Like many of the settlers, Solomon never seemed to be able to meet his payments due under his contract with the Holland Land Company. Just what the terms of the contract were we do not know. The Company had 3,600,000 acres of land to dispose of—land which they had purchased at an average of 32 cents an acre. This they sold to the settlers at prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$5.50 an acre.<sup>12</sup> The settlers were allowed to pay for their land in five or six equal annual installments, after which they received a deed. A heavy rate of interest was charged against all sums owing. Customarily the Company gave a second contract at the end of the five or six-year period if any of the money remained unpaid. Improvements on the property belonged to the Company until the debt was finally discharged. Payments had to be made in cash, an added difficulty on a frontier where cash was a scarce commodity.<sup>13</sup> In his *History of Chautauqua County* Young says: "The books of the Holland Land Company show remarkably slow progress of payments by purchasers

<sup>10</sup> It is still standing, under the name of St. Paul's United Evangelical Church. The two-foot foundation walls and the sixteen-inch-square beams under the floor show that it was sturdily built.

<sup>11</sup> His name appears as a witness to the contract. The contractor received fifty acres of land and \$1,878, paid half in cash and half in grain.

<sup>12</sup> By the terms of its incorporation in the New York State legislature, the company was exempted from taxation. It was backed by Dutch capital.

<sup>13</sup> Occasionally the Holland Land Company accepted cattle and wheat in lieu of cash, but the practice was satisfactory to neither side.



of lands. A large portion of them must have forfeited their claims."<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the reason that Solomon's name has not been found in the records of the Holland Land Company is that he never was able to keep up his payments and his interest charges and thus never was given a deed. In 1836 his son John Spencer "articled" (they customarily used this word to describe the transaction) with the Holland Land Company to purchase the 25 acres on which the Fosdick family had been living for fourteen years. The purchase price was \$137.75 or \$5.50 an acre. Five years later, he completed his payments (together with \$22.35 interest) and received a deed for the property in his own name.<sup>15</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, John Spencer, who was then teaching school, undoubtedly took this step to save the family home for his parents.

If Solomon came to Western New York with the idea that he was going to find there a more abundant life, he must have been a disappointed man. He found a stern, grinding life, close to the edge of want; and never while he lived did he escape the grip of straitened circumstances. But it seemingly had no effect upon his disposition; in the recollection of his children his was a buoyant and cheerful spirit. Hardship was the common lot of the frontier; it was a condition which Solomon shared with most of his neighbors.

There were, of course, influences which helped to soften the impact of austerity and stress. The church was one of them, and both Solomon and Anna, together with their children, seemed to have taken a deep interest in the Presbyterian Society, which, although it had no building until 1837, ministered alike to Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and others.

There was the sense, too, of common problems and common need which often drew the settlers together in a unique bond of sympathy and effort and which was shown in such activities as barn raisings, logging bees, husking parties, and wolf-hunts. The great wolf-hunt in the Boston Valley in 1830 became almost legendary in song and story, involving five or six hundred men gathered from all the towns around. The damage to flocks of sheep had been incalculable, and public wrath developed behind a determination to exterminate this scourge

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew W. Young (1875), p. 127.

<sup>15</sup> County Court Records (Buffalo), Vol. 75, p. 51.

once and for all. The wolf retreat lay in an unbroken wilderness of about twelve miles in circumference, and long lines of men closed in upon it in accordance with a carefully laid plan. Horns and cow bells were used as signals. But in spite of the effort only one wolf was shot; the rest of the pack broke through at a weakly guarded point. Never again, however, did they return to their old haunts in the Boston Valley.<sup>16</sup>

At another time, a ten-year-old boy became lost in the dense forest while taking a basket of lunch to the logging field where his father and several men were at work. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and men came by scores from miles around to join the search. By sunrise of the following day the child hunters were formed in an immense line which swept the woods in every direction. For more than a week the search continued, but no trace of the boy was ever found.<sup>17</sup>

The outstanding incident in the Boston Valley, however—an incident which Solomon's children never could forget—was the hanging of the three Thayers. The Thayer family lived in the north end of the village, a mile or two from the Fosdick home. They had as a boarder John Love, whose only occupation seemed to be lending small sums of money at high rates of interest. He evidently involved the three Thayer brothers in some financial difficulties, and they determined to get rid of him, a determination which they carried out in December, 1824, with a rifle and a meat-axe. They then buried the body, which was not discovered until the following spring. In the meantime, they forged a power of attorney and began collecting sums which others owed to Love. It was this final bit of recklessness which led to their undoing.

The inquest was held amid tremendous public excitement in the schoolhouse in Boston, and the trial and subsequent execution were surrounded by an atmosphere of incredible bathos. The judge, in sentencing the three brothers to be hanged, came to his climax in these words: "Farewell forever—until the Court and you, with all this assembled audience, shall meet together in the general resurrection." The hanging, which took place in Buffalo where the new City Hall now stands, was a combination of gala holiday and religious ceremony. Twenty-

<sup>16</sup> The story is told in Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151. Supplemented by stories told by my grandfather, John Spencer Fosdick.



five thousand people from the entire countryside came to see it, and it is said that every man, woman, and child of the Boston Valley attended. According to tradition, Solomon and his family were present. The hanging was preceded by a solemn march (with music) and two sermons, during which the three convicted men, clad in white shrouds, sat on their coffins. The scene became the subject of endless moralizing and countless sermons, and it has been celebrated in the folklore of Western New York by an incredible amount of maudlin poetry.<sup>18</sup>

Solomon Fosdick died of pneumonia in February, 1838, after an illness of eight days. He was 62 years old. His children always remembered that his funeral sermon was preached from II Corinthians, 5, 15.

Anna outlived her husband by 20 years. It was her proud boast that in an age of high infant mortality she had never lost a child, and that all her nine children had grown to maturity. She must have represented an extraordinary combination of fortitude, determination, and high ideals. Circumscribed by poverty, she refused to admit the existence of any limitations surrounding the lives of her children. It was she who kept them in school long after most of their companions had left it. It was she who instilled in them the stern moralities and the uncompromising integrity which were part of her own inner spirit. One wonders where in her strict Quaker upbringing she acquired her delight in Shakespeare, and how, in the rough life of the frontier, she kept the spark of this interest alive. And yet, in many of her ideas and habits she was a woman of the frontier. For example, she took genuine satisfaction in smoking a pipe with her husband; and after his death—occasionally to the embarrassment of one or two of her more fastidious children—she sometimes induced her daughter Alice to join her in the pastime.

To her children, particularly in her later years, she became almost an object of reverence, and the letters which they wrote each other betray their deep affection for her. "Our beloved Mother," was the phrase they customarily employed. In 1850,

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<sup>18</sup> There are various accounts extant. Aside from the newspapers, see *The Life, Trial, Condemnation and Dying Address of the Three Thayers*, Anonymous (Buffalo, 1825). Much of the sermonizing was stimulated by the charge that the three Thayers had a yoke of oxen, one of which they named "Jesus Christ," and the other "God Almighty."

hearing that she was ill, her son Morris wrote to his brother-in-law, Joseph Alger, urging him to employ a special nurse and bring in extra doctors. "Any professional services may be charged to me. . . . Were it not for official business in which a large number are interested I should be with you without delay, for believe me no business of my own would detain me from the place where that sainted Mother is confined by sickness."<sup>19</sup> "Mother dear," wrote her daughter Alice from Buffalo, where she was visiting her brother John Spencer, "don't you let us hear of your touching one particle of work. . . . You have done work enough. . . . John says everything Mother wants she must have, and shall if he knows of it. . . . Mother, wear that shawl every day"<sup>20</sup>

Anna died August 8, 1858, aged 81. For a number of years she had lived with her daughter, Elizabeth Fosdick Lake, in Springville,<sup>21</sup> a few miles over the hill from her homestead. Her youngest son, Jesse, used to recall in later years his last visit with her, just before she died: "She was wearing a homespun dress of her own making, and she ran around the house so rapidly it was difficult to keep track of her."<sup>22</sup> She was buried beside her husband in the small Cobble Hill Cemetery in the village of Boston, diagonally across the road from the spot where she and Solomon and their nine children had settled down in a log cabin in the hard winter of 1819.<sup>23</sup>

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*The Children of Solomon Fosdick\**

- (1) Samuel Fosdick, born March 8, 1799.
- (2) Angeline Fosdick, born February 19, 1801.
- (3) Prudence Fosdick, born December 13, 1803.
- (4) Morris Fosdick, born December 9, 1804.
- (5) Alice Hermion Fosdick, born June 21, 1807.
- (6) Elizabeth Gurney Fosdick, born May 1, 1809.
- (7) Mary Thorne Fosdick, born July 4, 1811.
- (8) *John Spencer Fosdick*, born March 3, 1817, the next lineal ancestor.
- (9) Jesse Thorne Fosdick, born April 28, 1819.

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<sup>19</sup> The letter is in the possession of Mrs. Earl Dye, of Boston, N. Y.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Undated.

<sup>21</sup> The Camden Lake house, which is still standing, now belongs to the I.O.O.F.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Fosdick Frank (Jesse's daughter) to the author.

<sup>23</sup> Their graves are marked by a monument.

• For details see Appendix VI.



## CHAPTER XVII

### JOHN SPENCER FOSDICK

**J**OHN SPENCER FOSDICK, Solomon's eighth child, was only two years old when the covered wagon of his father made the trip across New York State. There has been some belief that he was named after John Spencer, the celebrated Presbyterian missionary of Western New York; but inasmuch as he was born before the family arrived there, it seems more likely that he took his name from another John Spencer, who had settled in Rensselaerville in 1783 and whose son, with the same name, was a prominent merchant in Albany when John Spencer was born.

John Spencer, who was the author's grandfather, had a dim recollection of living in a log cabin, but most of his boyhood was associated with the "homestead" which his father had built in 1822. Vivid in his mind until he died was the memory of the stern and often bitter aspects of frontier life—the seemingly illimitable wilderness, the encroachment of forest, the never-ending battle with trees. As a boy he helped to cut down the woods and tear out the stumps so that there could be space for crops. The fields around the house where he lived are still outlined by the fences he built. Slung in a bag over his shoulder he carried to the mill the meager supply of grist to be ground into flour. He was barefoot most of the year, as were his brothers and sisters, and even in the winters of his early youth he occasionally had no shoes.

It was his mother's steady influence and the school which saw him through this difficult period. Of all of Solomon's nine children, John was the one to whom school meant the most. A schoolhouse had been built shortly after Solomon's arrival in the Boston Valley,<sup>1</sup> and as soon as he was old enough to attend, John, with his young brothers and sisters, was enrolled as a pupil. Their writing books and some of their primitive

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<sup>1</sup> The schoolhouse stood east of the main road on the north side of what is now the Colden Road.

textbooks are still in existence,<sup>2</sup> scribbled with such age-old maxims as:

Steal not this book  
For fear of shame,  
For here you see  
The owner's name.

The school term in those days generally lasted only three or four months, for children could not be spared from their demanding tasks at home. John, however, was a natural student with an intellectual curiosity which later became a thirst for knowledge. In this absorbing preoccupation he was loyally and sympathetically supported by his mother. By the time he was thirteen or fourteen he had outgrown anything that the local school and the limited talent of a local teacher could supply; but ten miles over the hills was the recently-opened Springville Academy, later called Griffith's Institute, and, at the urging of his mother, he and his older brother Morris entered as students.<sup>3</sup> Later they were joined by their youngest brother Jesse.

By today's standards the Springville Academy of 1830, except, perhaps, for its course in mathematics, would be a poorly equipped junior high school, but it represented the best that the frontier could supply. And it was a gallant best—particularly for a community where money was scarce—the subscription list to start the Academy comprising, in addition to some cash, gifts of cattle, bricks, lumber, and services. According to family tradition, John and his two brothers walked daily over the hills to school and back, a total distance of twenty miles.<sup>4</sup> However, as their sister Elizabeth married a Springville man in 1832 and thereafter lived in that village, it is possible that this daily feat of endurance was occasionally modified. Nevertheless, this youthful period was for John a strenuous time, for, in addition to his school work, he carried his heavy share of the home chores, and during all vacations was associated with his father as a carpenter's apprentice. Indeed it was toward the carpenter's trade that his life was being shaped.

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<sup>2</sup> In the author's possession.

<sup>3</sup> Morris was 13 years older than John. He had stopped school and gone into the tannery business as an apprentice. He then resolved to acquire a better education and entered Springville Academy at the age of 27.

<sup>4</sup> At that time the main road to Springville ran past the Fosdick house, over Townsend's Hill. The valley road connecting Boston and Springville was not constructed until years later.



But deep in John's heart, as well as in the hearts of his two brothers, a secret ambition was stirring. Perhaps it was due, in part, to the molding influence of the frontier—the self reliance and confidence which it taught, the sense of freedom which it gave, born of the knowledge that no barriers denied a man's right to move ahead. Perhaps it was due, too, to Anna's influence—her ambition, energy, and dynamic faith. In any event, John began to think of the possibility of becoming a teacher at about the same time that his brother Morris was debating with himself whether he could be a lawyer.

How long John attended the Springville Academy is not known, but it probably was not more than two years. In 1834, at the age of seventeen, he seems to have transferred to a new school in the village of Boston called the Boston Academy. Perhaps its relative nearness to his home made the step necessary. In November, 1834, John M. Swain, the principal of this new academy, wrote the following recommendation:

Mr. John S. Fosdick, the bearer, has for the last four months attended my school. He is a good scholar, sustaining a good, moral character, and is in every respect qualified for an instructor of youth.<sup>5</sup>

This was the realization of John's dream, and apparently his teaching responsibilities began at once. He seems to have started, probably in a small way, in the Boston Academy, located on the main road in a stone building which now constitutes the basement of St. Paul's United Evangelical Church. In 1836 he was placed in charge of the common school in nearby Hamburg, and in 1838 he was appointed to the similar school in Boston. His salary (\$37.50 for the school year) appears to have been paid partly in cash and partly in cords of wood, of which he kept meticulous records. Thirty years later John Fosdick was to startle the city of Buffalo by the revolutionary thesis that "a teacher should receive salary enough to obviate the necessity of his engaging in any other occupation"; but in 1838, on the impoverished frontier of the Boston Valley, such an ideal would have seemed not only unattainable but unnecessary.

As we have seen, the school terms extended for only four of the winter months, and carpentering was still John's major pro-

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<sup>5</sup> This recommendation is in the author's possession. With it are similar recommendations from at least half a dozen school boards.

fession. Ambition, however, ran hot in his veins. He was a strong, sturdy youth with the black hair and jet black eyes of his father, and, unlike his father, serious, a little grim and desperately in earnest. It was at this period that he taught himself Latin, propping up his Latin grammar on his carpenter's bench with a block of wood. It was at this time, too, that he came to his father's rescue by taking over from the Holland Land Company the contract for the purchase of the family homestead. For this, as we have seen, he agreed to pay over a term of five years a total sum of \$137.75—a responsibility which must have been difficult to carry, particularly in view of the fact that the panic of 1837, occurring a year after he signed the contract, carried the price of land per acre to abysmal depths, and made even harder the normal hard times of the Boston frontier.

The death of his father in 1838, three years before the homestead was finally paid for, must have brought serious complications. John's five sisters and his oldest brother, Samuel, were married and had homes of their own. His brother Morris lived in Springville and Jesse was in Randolph, in Cattaraugus County. Only John himself was now left with his mother at the homestead. How long this situation continued we cannot be certain—perhaps it was for two years. During this period John continued as the teacher of the common school in Boston and kept up his carpenter's trade when he could find work. He seems to have had active social relations with the community: in 1839 he appeared as the Friar in *Romeo and Juliet*, put on at the Boston Academy, and later as Old Gabbo in the *Merchant of Venice*.<sup>6</sup> His sister Prudence was living in the Hatch-Alger house at the foot of the hill, and the ties with his family were intimate and close.

But Boston had ceased to be a place of opportunity for a carpenter, and in the long eight-month school recess of 1840 John joined his brother Jesse in Randolph, fifty miles to the south. Located at what was then the head of navigation on the Allegheny River, Randolph was in a boom period; and Jesse, who, in addition to his carpentering, had taken a correspondence course in architecture, was finding plenty of work to do. In 1841 John resigned his position as teacher of the school in Boston and moved to Randolph, but not until he had received an

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<sup>6</sup> Programs in the author's possession.



appointment as teacher in the latter village. Carpentering might be necessary as a means of livelihood, but teaching had first claim on his loyalty and devotion.

What arrangements he made about the homestead in Boston we do not know—or how long his mother continued to live there. We do know, however, that John kept closely in touch with the situation in Boston, walking the fifty miles, back and forth, not infrequently in the next two years.<sup>7</sup>

It was at this time, too, that he became engaged to be married. The girl was Eunice Andrews, youngest daughter of Colonel Robert Andrews of Brimfield, Massachusetts. John met her at Springville, New York, where she was visiting, and according to tradition there was a family excursion to Niagara Falls, which at that time must have taken several days. After she returned to Brimfield, the two young people carried on a considerable correspondence, and finally the bashful and rustic John proposed and she accepted by letter.

He went east to Brimfield to marry her, travelling by way of the Erie Canal, and thence by stagecoach to his destination. It is significant that he made his final payment on the family homestead in Boston just a few days before he left. He and Miss Andrews were married on November 16, 1841; she was twenty-seven years old and he was twenty-four. The Brimfield records refer to him as "John S. Fosdick of Randolph, New York."<sup>8</sup>

And it was to Randolph, rather than to Boston, that he took his bride—to Randolph, with the school on the hill where he taught four months of the year, and with his carpenter's work which, now more necessary than ever, was increasingly uninteresting. Here in Randolph a boy was born to them whom they named Charles Austin, a boy who under the pseudonym of "Harry Castlemon" was to delight two generations of boys with his tales of adventure.

But tragedy lay ahead of this young couple. When the baby Charles was a year old, his mother was called home to Brimfield apparently by the illness of some member of her family. Leav-

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<sup>7</sup> John sold the homestead to Edward Churchill in 1848. (County Land Records, Buffalo, Vol. 97, p. 285.) Included in the purchase by Churchill were 41 acres adjoining the homestead (in Concord) which John had bought from his brother Samuel. Samuel had acquired this property from the Holland Land Company in 1830. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 523.)

<sup>8</sup> Vital Records, p. 158.

ing her child with John she made the long journey east, and there in her father's house she died, perhaps suddenly, September 8, 1843. Those were the days of lagging communication, and it was some weeks later before John heard the news. He never returned to Brimfield.

Out of his sorrow he created an opportunity. Why continue with the distasteful carpenter's work? Why not dedicate his life exclusively to teaching? Armed with an endorsement from the parents of his pupils, he stormed the citadels of the educational system of Buffalo. This was the endorsement:

We the undersigned inhabitants of the town of Randolph do certify that the bearer, John S. Fosdick, has instructed our children for the last two years, and believe him to be a man of good moral character and well qualified in every respect for an instructor of youth.<sup>9</sup>

John's future associates frequently spoke of his "rugged honesty" and his "commanding earnestness." It must have been these qualities that opened the door for this determined, black-eyed young man. In any event, in the fall of 1843 he was appointed a principal of the Grammar Schools in Buffalo, and he remained with the school system of that city for the next twenty-six years, earning the title which his associates conferred on him at his death: "one of the great teachers of his generation." During one of the twenty-six years he served as Professor of Mathematics in the Buffalo High School, and for two years he was the city's Superintendent of Education.

In 1845 he married again, this time Mary Blain, daughter of Reverend Jacob Blain, minister of the Dearborn Street Baptist Church in Buffalo. She was a woman of singular intelligence, four years his junior.<sup>10</sup> Her father had been stationed in various pastorates in New Jersey and New York, and she had a background of cultural advantage and sophistication which John perhaps lacked. Her great grandfather, William Blain, a colonial soldier in the French and Indian War, had been captured by Montcalm's forces at Oswego and had died as a prisoner of war in France. Her father as a boy had served in the American Navy in the War of 1812. She had attended various schools and had studied under her father, who was himself

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<sup>9</sup> In the author's possession.

<sup>10</sup> She was born at Malta, N. Y., April 21, 1821.



something of a scholar. Her education, therefore, was far above the average level of her time, and she brought to her marriage unusual talents, not the least of which, for John's benefit, was a sense of humor shown in her mischievous, dancing eyes. After her marriage, she herself became a teacher, and for many years was connected with the various grammar schools of which her husband was principal. This husband-wife relationship, unique at that time in the teaching profession, was a pattern of harmony and effectiveness.

Several years ago the author received a letter from a man who had been a student of John and Mary Fosdick in Public School Number 14 on Franklin Street in Buffalo. This is what he said in part:

The first teacher I had at Number 14 was a Mr. French who believed in corporal punishment. He would call a boy to walk into the recitation room to be, as he said, introduced to "Dr. Ebony," a weighty ruler. French left to enlist in the Civil War, and his successors were Mr. and Mrs. John Fosdick. There was no more corporal punishment. They ruled by affection, and the love they showed to all not only won the scholars' respect but stimulated them to greater efforts. I have never forgotten them or their influence on my life.<sup>11</sup>

In trying to understand the character of John Fosdick, one has to remember that in 1841, when he first went to Randolph, he was swept away by the great Baptist revival of that era and renounced whatever loyalty he had, through his father, to the Church of England. In a sense it was a return to Puritanism and to the Puritan virtues of self-denial, rigor, and earnestness, accompanied, perhaps, by an unconscious fear of ease and grace and lightheartedness. In this respect it was consistent with John Fosdick's own natural disposition. His less inhibited younger brother, Jesse, writing years afterward, said:

I remember seeing the old Baptist Elders herding candidates into the Jordan—or rather, the 18-mile creek [in Boston]. Brother Samuel and his wife received eternal salvation by being plunged beneath the flood, with many others, back of the burying ground. Brother John had his sins washed away in the muddy Conowango [in Randolph]. I remain unwashed for the reason that I do not take much stock in the water cure.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Wm. W. Bailey, of San Diego, California. Letter dated April 11, 1938.

<sup>12</sup> Jesse Fosdick to his grandniece, Fanny Alger, June 3, 1885. Letter in possession of Mrs. Earl Dye, Boston, N. Y.

To John Fosdick, however, his religion was his life.<sup>13</sup> It was not only a set of rigid beliefs, it was a dynamic force. It was the central core that gave purpose and meaning to all he did. Out of his often grim but always sturdy orthodoxy came the propulsion which not only made him a great teacher but which motivated what he conceived to be his civic responsibilities. Hating slavery, he deserted the Democratic party of his father and brothers and became first a "Free-Soiler"—"free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men"—and then a Republican, voting for Frémont in 1856, and with passionate enthusiasm for Lincoln in 1860. Believing with Seward that "there is a law higher than the Constitution," he served, in the decade before the Civil War, as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, where he was assigned to spirit the runaway slaves on the last leg of their journey across the Niagara River into Canada. In his house one night on Ellicott Street in Buffalo, a slave, hidden in a closet, died of fright, thinking, mistakenly, that he heard the footsteps of the federal officers.<sup>14</sup> Quite apart from the risk of detection and arrest, John was embarked on dangerous business—particularly in a rowboat at night on a treacherous stream—and it was business that required muscular arms and a stout heart.<sup>15</sup>

During and following the Civil War, John became deeply interested in the plight of the prisoners in Buffalo's jails and penitentiaries and spent a great deal of such spare time as he had in visiting them. He was given free access to their cells

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<sup>13</sup> For many years he served as clerk of the Niagara Square Baptist Church in Buffalo. When this church was disbanded, he joined the Washington Street Baptist Church. Later, he was for many years a deacon of the Westfield Baptist Church and a teacher of the men's class in the Bible School. "In the coming of Bro. Fosdick to the Church," said George W. Sawin, "there came one who was not only a day teacher, but a most wonderful Bible teacher. The writer was a member of his class. Bro. Fosdick was a soul-winner at all times, a wise councillor to the young, a man who knew God, and knew how to pray to Him. In his passing away, the church lost a beacon-light; yet he left his influence on many lives in our Church and town, which still remains in the lives of some yet here." (From a manuscript history of the Westfield Baptist Church, undated. In the author's possession.)

<sup>14</sup> The house is still standing, 677 Ellicott Street, on the southeast corner of Virginia Street.

<sup>15</sup> John's brother Morris, who was practicing law in Springville, had nothing but scorn for John's political opinions and remained a consistent Democrat until he died in 1872. Writing to his brother Jesse in 1864, he said: "I am in full faith that the constitution will be maintained as it is, and the Union as it was, notwithstanding the howling of incendiary abolition hypocrites." (Letter in author's possession.)



and became, in a sense, the prototype of the modern "case-worker," although it must be admitted that his approach was largely evangelical and that his Sunday sermons in the jails seemed to him the most important part of his activities along this line. However, his labor in this field was remembered for many years after he left Buffalo. Just as he based his relationship with the Underground Railroad on a Bible text: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee," so his work in the penitentiaries of Buffalo was supported in his own mind by the text: "I was in prison and ye came unto me."

In the fifties, and again in the seventies while living in Westfield, John lectured for the temperance movement which was at that time sweeping the country. Never in his life had he touched alcohol, and his moral sensibilities were aroused by its widespread abuse and the degradation which it so often produced. Unfortunately these lectures have not been preserved, nor do we know where they were delivered; but it is possible to picture him on the platform, with his black hair and beard, his piercing black eyes, and his slow and deliberate manner of speaking, winning his audiences by the obvious sincerity of his convictions.

It was to the teaching profession, however, that he gave the enthusiasm and devotion of a lifetime. This was his first love, his constant preoccupation. In the fall of 1865 he was persuaded to run on the Union ticket in Buffalo for the office of Superintendent of Education—an elective position with a two-year term.<sup>16</sup> Warmly supported by Buffalo's leading newspapers, he was successful and entered on his new responsibilities January 1st, 1866. Up to that time the office had been occupied by generally respectable but none too energetic people, and it was looked upon as more or less of a political sinecure. It paid \$1200 a year; John as principal of School Number 14 had been getting \$1300.

If any of the political leaders of Buffalo thought that John would follow the customary pattern of the office, they were destined to an abrupt awakening. He came in like a cyclone, full of ideas, born of long experience, for the betterment of the

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<sup>16</sup> Variouslly called Superintendent of Education, Superintendent of Schools, and Superintendent of Public Schools.

public schools. His first act was revolutionary, and at the end of his initial year he described it to the Common Council of the city in these words:

From the time of my election in November until I assumed the duties of my office, January 1st, over 200 applications for teachers' positions were made to me; and outside influences were used to induce me to appoint this or that candidate. . . . I determined to hold a public examination of all the candidates, and to appoint only those who showed, by their answers to the questions propounded, that they were well qualified for the responsibilities they sought to assume. The results confirmed me in my decision: out of the large number of applicants only 59 were present, and four of these left the room without attempting to answer any of the questions. Only 24 passed the examination, and these were accepted, and as fast as vacancies occurred in the schools were appointed.

The rejection of a teacher for want of requisite qualifications was such an innovation upon the usages of the Department for the past few years, especially if the applicant had influential friends, that I was denounced in no measured terms; and it was publicly proclaimed that I would yield to pressure brought to bear on me and appoint teachers whom I knew to be incompetent; but up to this time no one has received an appointment to a position in our schools without having passed an examination.<sup>17</sup>

John's second act was even more revolutionary. He turned the same battery of guns on the teachers already in service.

The first experiment convinced me [he said] that many of the teachers already in our system were not qualified for the duties they had assumed. The lifeless manner in which these teachers performed their duties showed that they were not in the habit of studying.

So he forced the entire body of over 250 teachers to take a qualifying examination. "Some failed to answer the simplest questions," he reported. "A few did not attempt to write out any of the answers. Some who had been employed in our schools for years, and perhaps were qualified when appointed, found to their surprise that the questions submitted to them were quite beyond their reach."

However, he did not make a clean sweep of all those who had failed—"to do so would have disrupted the schools," he said—but he served effective notice that thereafter high standards in teaching were going to be enforced and maintained.

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<sup>17</sup> Report of the Superintendent of Schools to the Common Council for 1866, Buffalo.



On the physical condition of the schools in the thirty-six districts of the city he spoke with stern indignation. For a quarter of a century he had lived in those schools and he knew them intimately.

These cheap buildings which are a standing disgrace to the city in their dilapidated condition. . . .

The rooms are so low and so poorly ventilated as to endanger the health of teachers and pupils. This school should be abandoned at once, and a commodious building erected for the use of the lower grades.

The want of sewers in the yards. . . . It cannot be put in a condition to render it a suitable place in which to educate children.

This school lot is too small and affords no playgrounds for the pupils. I recommend the selling of the property.

The school is a disgrace to the inhabitants of the district. Children are crowded into this miserable apology for a school house when a tasty building of sufficient capacity to accommodate them could be built so cheaply.

[Of a new school which had just been built.] It is to be regretted that a school building should be erected on the plan of this one. To say nothing of its inconveniences, its want of proper ventilation and proper ingress and egress should condemn it for school purposes. The large rooms are ventilated, if it can be called ventilation, by openings at the top by which the warm-air escapes, leaving the cold air and poisonous exhalations for the comfort of teachers and pupils. The stairway to the third story is much too narrow . . . and yet this narrow passage is the only one leading to a school room where 150 pupils are taught daily.

A school house should never be more than two stories high; from the second floor there should be two ways of egress, and these should be as far apart as the size of the building will admit. There is danger when 200 pupils are assembled in the third story of a building with only a narrow flight of stairs by which they can make their escape in cases of accident or alarm.

The new Superintendent also tackled what he thought was one of the principal evils of the school system: the lack of any systematic plan of study for each of the grades. As he pointed out to the Common Council, teachers selected their own textbooks and were controlled by their own fondness for this or that study. Against determined opposition he pushed through what was called a graded course of instruction, prescribing where in the year's work a particular subject should be commenced, the textbooks to be used, the ground to be covered,

and—most important of all—embodying the principle that students could be promoted from lower to higher grades only by passing a written examination.

John's two years as Superintendent were the most active years of his life. He resurrected and placed on a firm basis the evening schools which had been started in a half-hearted way some years before and had been abandoned; he introduced the teaching of German into the public schools, for, as he told the Common Council, "it is unjust to compel our German-speaking citizens (of whom there are rapidly increasing numbers) to tax themselves in order to learn the language spoken in the home circle, and which is the only medium of obtaining a knowledge of some of their most cherished literature." He fought for an increase in teachers' salaries and remarked when the battle was over: "This measure was brought to a successful vote, not without opposition from the enemies of public instruction." At the end of his administration he was able to say: "The discipline of the schools has been changed, so that cases of corporal punishment and especially of severe punishment are now almost unknown. The teachers now find that a kind word more surely reaches the heart than a frown or a blow, and that a thirst for knowledge is a better incentive to study than threats of punishment."<sup>18</sup>

To accomplish this revolution in Buffalo's public school system, John Fosdick had an office force consisting of a part-time clerk whom he shared with the mayor. John wrote all his own letters, kept the books of the department, examined the bills for the new school buildings, prepared with his own hand the necessary notices and reports, and remarked, rather apologetically, to the Common Council that he had had too little time to visit the schools as often as he would have liked.

There was a refreshing directness, a rugged honesty, about his approach to his problems which was characteristic of the man himself. He said what he thought and he said it regardless of consequences. For example, early in his administration he bluntly gave the Common Council his opinion of the system by which he had been chosen Superintendent.

It is to be regretted [he said] that the office has to be filled biennially, and that, too, by a popular election, thus identifying the head of the department with some political party. The conse-

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<sup>18</sup> Report of the Superintendent of Schools for 1867.



quences resulting from this are not favorable to the schools, as every action of the Superintendent is viewed from a political standpoint, and he is opposed or supported in his endeavors to elevate the standard of popular education, on political grounds. The present incumbent has studied to keep clear of politics in his administration of the affairs of the department; but he has frequently been embarrassed by having them thrust upon him, and it has been very difficult at times to prevent the complications that are brought about by them. He has not sought to know what were the political opinions of the employees of the department, and flatters himself that the friends of the public schools are satisfied with this course.<sup>19</sup>

This outspoken independence, however, was not popular with the politicians, and at the end of his two-year term John was not asked to run again. Probably he would have declined even had the invitation been extended, for he had been through a gruelling experience which had tested even his rugged strength. In an impromptu address which he made shortly afterward to a group of teachers who had met to honor him appeared this comment:

I believe it is impossible for a Superintendent to do his duty satisfactorily. If he could pay all the expenses of the department without taxes, if all contractors were honest, if everybody and nobody could simultaneously have their own way, if everybody's sister could have a position as a teacher and have everybody's daughter to assist them, and if every teacher could have a salary of a thousand a year, then a Superintendent might give universal satisfaction. . . . I once heard a man say that he thought he had done his duty because he had made everyone mad. Tonight I can enjoy the same reflection.<sup>20</sup>

Deep in John's heart was the desire to return to active teaching. This had been the ambition of his youth and it was still the ambition of his late middle years. A new school which had been built during his incumbency as Superintendent was just opening, and he accepted the principalship.<sup>21</sup> At its dedication in January, 1868, the speaker of the occasion made this comment:

That this school will justify public expectation we have every assurance by the assignment of John S. Fosdick to its charge. No

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 1866.

<sup>20</sup> *Buffalo Courier*, January 7, 1868.

<sup>21</sup> No. 36, on Day's Park. His wife, Mary, taught with him at No. 36. During his superintendency she had taught at No. 14.

teacher has been longer connected with our public schools than has he . . . and no one has commanded more universal respect for uprightness and moral integrity.<sup>22</sup>

John was not destined long to continue with the public schools of Buffalo. From Westfield, in Chautauqua County, New York, sixty miles to the south, came the offer of the principalship of the Westfield Academy, a school with an excellent scholastic record, which had just completed a new and commodious brick building to take the place of an older structure. This was an advanced school, corresponding to the high school of today, as contrasted with the grammar schools with which John had been so long associated. Here was a chance to teach advanced students, to resume instruction on a level which he had so thoroughly enjoyed in his one year at the Buffalo High School. Here, too, was an opportunity to get away from the city and live once more the outdoor life to which he had been accustomed in his youth. There was no financial inducement which led him to make the change. Indeed it was a sacrifice; for he was getting \$1300 a year in Buffalo, and the salary at Westfield was \$1200. But he accepted the offer and took up his new responsibilities in the fall of 1869. On the outskirts of the village, at the foot of the Chautauqua Hills, he bought a farm of about fifty acres, with a new and comfortable house, and here he settled down for the balance of his life.<sup>23</sup>

His career in the Westfield Academy lasted nine years. He brought to the institution a prestige which it had never known, and the course which he gave in what was called "Mental and Moral Philosophy" was, as one of his pupils later said, "an inspiring example of great teaching." The mark of his vigorous personality and leadership was impressed not only on his community but all along the shore of Lake Erie, where his lectures to teachers' institutes on the techniques of teaching were eagerly welcomed. Even today in that area his memory has not been forgotten, and his picture hangs in a place of honor in the high school building in Westfield.

What John Fosdick did not take into consideration in accepting the new position in 1869 was that politics and favoritism

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<sup>22</sup> Superintendent's report for 1868.

<sup>23</sup> The house still stands at 171 South Portage Street. It is today owned by Robert G. Cady.



could exist in a small village as readily as in a city, and that the understandings reached with one Board of Education did not necessarily bind its successors. We do not know how the difficulty started, or over what specific issue; but it probably had to do with the question of the qualifications of teachers, about which John, as he had shown in Buffalo, had stern standards. He would not accept a teacher just because she was somebody's sister, and the minutes of the Westfield Board of Education reflect, faintly to be sure, a growing antagonism between some of its members and their forthright principal. The matter reached a crisis in the spring of 1878, with the exact issue still not disclosed. In May of that year the board passed a resolution saying that "we feel it is desirable to make a change of Principal at this time, and recommend that steps be taken to secure the services of a suitable person for that position."<sup>24</sup> John, therefore, closed his work at the commencement exercises a month later.

It took the small village of Westfield a little time to realize the significance of what had happened. Then the revolt started, and in the following year, at the largest-attended school election in the history of the village, John Fosdick was swept into office as a member of the Board of Education for a three-year term. During this period he never missed a meeting, and the minutes show that he was easily the dominating figure on the board.

But his teaching days were over, and, although he was only 61 years old, he retired to his beloved farm on the edge of the village and struggled for the remainder of his life to make his grape crop pay. He died May 19, 1892, at the age of 75. His wife, Mary, survived him eleven years, and was buried beside him in the Westfield Cemetery in 1904.

Few grandsons ever understand their grandfathers. To me as a small boy my grandfather seemed stern and forbidding, and his black eyes bored through me in a frightening way. And yet as I thumb over the yellowing newspaper clippings about him, the tributes of his students, the letters of his friends and contemporaries, the resolutions adopted at his death, I come across words like "genial" and "companionable"—strange words when

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<sup>24</sup> The minutes of the Board for this period are in the Westfield High School.

applied to him. That he was a man of exceptional moral power I have no doubt; that phrase is used again and again in describing him. Perhaps back of the formidable exterior and behind the black and piercing eyes there was another personality that a small boy could not know.

My grandmother I recall with much greater clarity. I remember her as a serene and gracious person, with a quick and active mind, avidly interested in newspapers and what was happening in the world, discussing with my father the new books and ideas that were current, particularly in the field of politics. I remember her especially in her long, black widow's veil, sitting in the pew of the little Baptist church in Westfield, and driving back in the old buggy through the cemetery to pause for a moment in silence beside the grave of her husband. An old daguerreotype shows the two of them sitting side by side, in what must have been their best clothes—he with his black, unruly hair and grim, stern face, and she with her dancing eyes looking into the camera as if she were saying:

Time's glory is to calm contending kings . . .  
To tame the unicorn and lion wild.

Perhaps she said this to him. He knew his Shakespeare and I am sure he would have appreciated it.

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*The Children of John Spencer Fosdick\**

*By Eunice Andrews*

- (1) Charles Austin Fosdick, born September 6, 1842.

*By Mary Blain*

- (2) John Spencer Fosdick, Jr., born August 14, 1846; died September 2, 1847.  
 (3) William Morris Fosdick, born March 14, 1850; died September 19, 1850.  
 (4) *Frank Sheldon Fosdick*, born March 11, 1851, the next lineal ancestor.  
 (5) Dora Fosdick, born February 22, 1863.

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\* For details see Appendix VII.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### FRANK SHELDON FOSDICK

**M**Y father, Frank Sheldon Fosdick, inherited the black hair of his ancestors, but the black eyes which had come down through three generations were at last muted, and father's brown eyes danced like his mother's. He had a light-heartedness, a capacity for gaiety, a love of fun and laughter, which were not in keeping with the Puritanism of his father's family. In that respect he was his mother's child; but he was his father's child, too. He could be stern when sternness was required, and in his long service as a teacher no student ever cared to challenge his authority.

He was born March 11, 1851, at the house on Ellicott Street which is still standing, and except for his college years all his life was spent in Buffalo. Vivid in his recollection were the bitter days of the Civil War—his father's deep depression over the early defeats of the Union armies, the anxieties about his half brother Charles, who was serving in the navy on the Mississippi River, Lincoln's funeral train as it came through Buffalo, with the engine and all the cars draped in crepe.

As the only living son of his mother, his education was a matter of painstaking consideration. He graduated in 1864 from Grammar School No. 14, of which his father was principal and where his mother was one of the leading teachers, and to the end of his life he remembered their inspiring abilities in the class room. "No one could ever surpass my mother as a teacher," he used to say. He continued his education at the Central High School in Buffalo and then entered the University of Rochester, where he graduated in 1872 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts—the first college-bred man in the long line of this branch of the Fosdick family.

Born of such parents, my father could hardly have turned to any other profession than teaching. Teaching was in his blood; he had been brought up in a home where the problems and techniques of education had constituted the daily topic of conversation. His first position in the autumn after his gradua-

tion from Rochester was as an instructor of Latin and Greek in the Buffalo Classical School, a private institution under the supervision of Dr. Horace Briggs. But deep in his heart my father did not believe in private schools. To him the public school system was the foundation of democracy; and after a year with Dr. Briggs he gave his allegiance and devotion to the public schools of Buffalo, just as his father had done exactly thirty years before.<sup>1</sup> That allegiance and devotion were to remain constant for the next fifty-three years.

In 1873, just before he assumed his new responsibilities in the public school system, my father married Amie Weaver, of Westfield, to whom he had been engaged since his Junior year in college.<sup>2</sup> For the fourth consecutive generation, the representative of this line of the Fosdick family chose as his wife a woman of outstanding ability and character. Mother's family—the Weavers—came from a long line of farmers and coopers that had originally settled in Rhode Island in 1643 and had slowly drifted west across New England and New York State.<sup>3</sup> She graduated from the Westfield Academy of which John Spencer Fosdick had just become the principal. Her primary interest in her early days was in music, and somewhere she acquired the ability to express herself on paper in simple, direct, and effective prose. Years later she and father were active participants in the Chautauqua Literary Circle—that amazing outburst of adult education which swept through the last two decades of the 19th century and into the 20th—and mother's papers which she prepared and presented to the local group show genuine gifts of condensation, arrangement, and happy phrasing. I have her papers now, written in her precise Spencerian hand, and I wonder how, in the midst of her household cares, with no help and often in precarious health, she found time to prepare them—papers on Charlemagne, for example, and Madame de Staël, and the early leaders in the crusade for women's rights.

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<sup>1</sup> "I should ignore all my past life," said John Spencer Fosdick in a speech in 1868, "did I not believe that our free schools are the entire dependence of our government. You may multiply private schools as much as you please, but they never can meet the fundamental challenge of our times." *Buffalo Courier*, January 7, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> She was born September 4, 1853.

<sup>3</sup> Lucius E. Weaver, *The Weaver Genealogy* (Rochester, N. Y., 1928).



But there was an indomitable streak in my mother. Duty to her was indeed the stern daughter of the voice of God. Beneath her quiet gentleness and instinctive sympathy she had a granite-like quality. Duty and honor and truth were her standards and with these standards there could be no compromise. She was deeply devout, and outside of her family and children the church was perhaps her major interest. But her concern was personal rather than institutional. She had little interest in dogma or creeds or in the philosophical or speculative approach to religion. Her emphasis was invariably on conduct—not what people professed to believe, but what they did. She had been born and brought up on a farm and there was a delightful earthy tang about her and a hard, practical core of common sense which underlay what my father playfully used to call “her incorrigible idealism.”

Mother died in 1904, and in 1907 my father married Myrtilla Constantine, who had been one of his teachers in the Masten Park High School. Again, it was a happy and thoroughly successful marriage.

In taking up his work with the Buffalo public schools in 1873, father was first appointed principal of Grammar School No. 25, on Lewis Street, where he stayed for five years. Then he became principal of School No. 33, on Elk Street—“a tough school,” he used to say. “They needed a strong hand.” From there he was transferred to School No. 36, on Day’s Park, which his father had built while he was Superintendent of Education and of which he was principal when he received the call from Westfield. In 1884 my father went to the Central High School as Professor of Latin and Greek—one of the happiest periods of his life. He was an excellent classical scholar, and his notebooks which survive today, with their beautifully shaded handwriting and their meticulous lettering of the Greek vocabulary, show the immense amount of labor which he gave to this new responsibility. The margins of his textbooks of Xenophon, Virgil, and the *Iliad* are studded with his finely penned cross references to Greek and Latin grammars; and in later years, when his children were studying the classics, he could always be depended on to translate a difficult passage or elucidate an abstruse point. Teaching these languages was for him a supreme delight; and even when his increasing administrative

responsibilities made regular teaching impossible, nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to take the Latin class of an absent teacher, or to step into a class for a fifteen-minute period of interrogation. His children can testify that these fifteen-minute sessions were spirited and provocative.

In 1891 he was made principal of the High School Annex, and later of the High School Annexes, as Buffalo delayed the construction of a much needed new high school building. In 1897, however, the building to house from 1200 to 1500 students was completed—high on the hill in the center of Masten Park.<sup>4</sup> Here for twenty-nine years father served as principal, and the Masten Park High School, under his inspired leadership, attained a position of dominance throughout the state. To generations of school children he was known as “Pop,” a term that symbolized not only the affection in which he was held but the character of his relationship with young people. To walk with him down Main Street in Buffalo, particularly in his later years, was a revealing experience. He knew everybody and everybody knew him; and he had a phenomenal gift for remembering the names and faces of hundreds of his former pupils.

The fascination of his life was children. To his own children he was a source of endless delight, entering into their games, wrestling with them, fishing with them in the Niagara River or in the streams around Westfield. Anything that children did seemed to interest him. He never could pass a vacant lot where boys were playing ball without stopping to watch them. He kept himself young by sharing the interests of youth. And he had sheer genius in handling young people.

Yet no children ever took advantage of him. He expected obedience and obtained it without difficulty. Punishments he abhorred. There was something about him—a dignity, a presence, a sudden steely look in his eyes—which instantly froze any tendency to impertinence. His own children were pupils at his school, and I remember when a class under a new teacher would get out of hand, father’s tall form, unexpectedly appearing in the doorway, would bring a death-like silence, and the disorder would evaporate under the look in his eyes.

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<sup>4</sup> The school burned down in 1912, and a new one was erected on the same site, housing 2000 pupils.



As I recall him now, after all these years, I think of him as one to whom was given the golden talent of bringing encouragement and inspiration to others. His great gift was to build pride and ambition in a boy or girl. He could create in young people the desire to succeed, to get ahead, to be of use in the world. Even today, long after his death, he lives in the memory and affection of the generations of children, many of them now grown old, whose lives were molded and inspired by the warmth and magnetism of his personality.

In his old age many honors came to him—awards, degrees, and the recognition that is given to a man who has become almost an institution in his community. His later birthdays were celebrated by dinners attended by hundreds of his former students. On his 75th birthday in 1926, when he announced his retirement from the principalship of the school, he was greeted by an outpouring of public affection and respect, which, as one of the newspapers editorially remarked, was almost unique in the history of Buffalo.<sup>5</sup>

This recognition undoubtedly pleased him, but among his papers I found this letter which had evidently brought him peculiar satisfaction and which throws a light on the kind of man he was:

Dear Dr. Fosdick:

The other night, during the commencement exercises at the Masten Park High School, a little incident occurred for which I wish personally to thank you. As you will remember, the hall was packed, so that many of the people were standing. There was one elderly person who attracted you, not only because she was standing but because she was a very old lady. You stepped down from the platform, went to the back of the room, and assisted her to a chair on the stage. That old lady happened to be my mother. She had come from Silver Creek to Buffalo to see her niece graduate, and she tells me it was one of the greatest events of her life. She could not thank you because she speaks no English, but I want you to know how deeply she appreciated your courtesy, and what it meant to her.

Father died at my home in Montclair, New Jersey, February 27, 1927, seven months after he had retired. He was buried in the cemetery in Westfield beside his father and mother—while the flags in Buffalo were flying at half mast and the city authori-

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<sup>5</sup> Buffalo *Courier-Express*, March 12, 1926.

ties were adding the name Fosdick to the school he had served so long.

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*The Children of Frank Sheldon Fosdick\**

*By Amie Weaver*

- (1) Harry Emerson Fosdick, born May 24, 1878.
- (2) Ethel Dunning Fosdick, born November 24, 1880; died March 22, 1881.
- (3) Raymond Blaine Fosdick, born June 9, 1883.
- (4) Edith Wellington Fosdick, born June 9, 1883.

*By Myrtilla Constantine*

- (5) Ruth Sheldon Fosdick, born January 24, 1909.

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\* For details see Appendix VIII.





## APPENDICES

**T**HE following appendices relate to collateral branches of the particular Fosdick line discussed in this volume—the brothers and sisters and their descendants. This information is not in any sense complete; it represents, particularly in the later generations, merely such data as various uncoordinated studies have unearthed. It is suggestive rather than definitive—a nucleus around which more adequate genealogical tables might some day be constructed. In addition to my own research, these appendices are based on the work of Lewis Fosdick and on the papers of Charles Fosdick, of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and Judge Frederick Fosdick, of Boston.

The research over many years by various branches of the family seems to point to the conclusion that all the members of the Fosdick family now residing in America are descended from Stephen Fosdick, of Charlestown, Massachusetts. In 1889 Dr. Marvin Fosdick, of Almena, Michigan, published a pamphlet in which he sought to prove that there were three distinct Fosdick families in America. Many years later, Charles Fosdick, of Fitchburg, told me he had satisfied Marvin Fosdick that there was only one such family—descended from Stephen. This, also, was Lewis Fosdick's considered judgment. The research of Lewis and Charles Fosdick on this point was far more extensive than mine, but, on the basis of such facts as I have been able to gather, their conclusion seems reasonable.



## APPENDIX I

*The Children of Stephen<sup>1</sup> Fosdick*

By Anna Harre

- i. HANNAH<sup>2</sup> FOSDICK, b. in England, 1615; m. James Barrett, 1642, apparently in Charlestown. Later lived in Malden.  
Children (surname *Barrett*), b. in Charlestown (perhaps others later in Malden):  
1. *James*,<sup>3</sup> b. 1644.  
2. *Hannah*, b. 1647.
- ii. THOMAS FOSDICK, b. in England, 1616; m. Damaris (last name missing). Two children, age and sex unknown, who are mentioned in their grandfather's (*Stephen<sup>1</sup>*) will. ("Moreover my executrix is to pay twenty pounds to my two grandchildren of my sonne Thomas Fosdick.") Thomas d. 1650.
- iii. MARTHA FOSDICK, b. in England, 1617; m. Richard Holden and lived in Watertown, Mass. A descendant of hers in the sixth generation, Oliver<sup>6</sup> Holden (*Nehemiah*,<sup>5</sup> *John*,<sup>4</sup> *Stephen*,<sup>3</sup> *Martha*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen<sup>1</sup> Fosdick*) wrote the hymn "Coronation."
- iv. SAMUEL FOSDICK, b. in England, 1618; unmarried; d. May 22, 1649, on a trip to Barbados, while serving as a carpenter on the ship "Fortune."
- v. Unknown, possibly SARAH.
- vi. Unknown.

By Sarah Wetherell

- vii. JOHN FOSDICK, b. in England, 1626. The next lineal ancestor. See Chapters V and VI and Appendix II.
- viii. MARY FOSDICK, b. in England, 1630; admitted to church in Charlestown, 1652; m. Thomas Webb.

## APPENDIX II

*The Children of John<sup>2</sup> Fosdick*

By Ann Shapley

- i. JAMES<sup>3</sup> FOSDICK, b. June 17, 1649; m. Hannah (last name unknown); drowned March 9, 1695-96.  
Children:
  1. James,<sup>4</sup> d. July 13, 1689.
  2. Hannah, b. June 20, 1690; m. John Fuller 1713.
  3. Mary, b. March 10, 1691-2; d. Jan., 1704.
  4. Ann, b. Feb. 16, 1693-4; d. July 19, 1714.
  5. James, b. Feb. 3, 1695-6; d. July 22, 1697.
- ii. ANNA FOSDICK, b. Oct. 2, 1653; m. Samuel Blunt, June 9, 1680; d. Aug. 8, 1715.
- iii. SAMUEL FOSDICK, b. 1655. The next lineal ancestor, designated Samuel I. See Chapters VII, VIII, and IX, and Appendix III.
2. iv. JOHN FOSDICK, b. Feb. 20, 1658-9.
3. v. STEPHEN FOSDICK, b. Nov. 1, 1660.
4. vi. THOMAS FOSDICK, b. Nov. 1, 1662.
- vii. JOSEPH FOSDICK, b. April 1, 1665; drowned June 19, 1668.
- viii. SARAH FOSDICK, b. April 22, 1667; d. Aug. 22, 1668.
5. ix. JONATHAN FOSDICK, b. Aug. 25, 1669.  
By Elizabeth Betts
- x. SARAH FOSDICK, b. June 11, 1687; m. Daniel Newell, 1707. Was involved in a long legal altercation with her half brothers over her share of her father's estate.

2. JOHN<sup>3</sup> FOSDICK (*John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born February 20, 1658-9. A blacksmith, lived in Boston. Owned the covenant April 15, 1677. Married Sarah Bligh, who died in Boston, January 1, 1717-8, aged 58 years. John died in 1744, having amassed considerable property. His wife's father, Capt. Nathaniel Reynolds, owned the house where Benjamin Franklin was born. Later this property came in John's hands.

Children (born in Boston):

- i. SARAH,<sup>4</sup> b. Feb. 19, 1684-5; m. Jeremiah Belknap.
  - ii. JOHN, b. March 6, 1685-6; d. April 28, 1692.
  - iii. JAMES, b. July 28, 1687; m. (1) Phoebe Manley, April 27, 1710, in Boston; she d. Sept. 12, 1713; (2) Sarah Lewist, April 7, 1715, who died Nov. 12, 1721, in Charlestown. One child, Sarah,<sup>5</sup> b. Nov. 7, 1721; d. Nov. 16, 1721.
3. STEPHEN<sup>3</sup> FOSDICK (*John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born November 1, 1660. A mariner. Married Margaret Martin in 1685. He died May 19, 1730.



## Children:

- i. STEPHEN,<sup>4</sup> b. March 2, 1686-7; d. June 14, 1687.
- ii. MARGARET, b. Aug. 1, 1688; d. Aug. 2, 1688.
- iii. MARGARET, b. April 3, 1691; m. Lewis Mallet.
- iv. STEPHEN, b. Aug. 21, 1693; d. Sept. 27, 1693.
- v. STEPHEN, b. Aug. 26, 1694; m. Joannah Lowel, of Newbury, Jan. 1, 1714-5.

## Children:

- 1. *Joannah*,<sup>5</sup> b. Feb. 24, 1715-6.
- 2. *John*.
- vi. RICHARD, b. June 27, 1698; m. Margaret Cotton.

## Children:

- 1. *Richard*,<sup>5</sup> b. May 23, 1723.
- 2. *John*, who later may have lived in Truro.
- 3. *Ann*.
- 4. *Margaret*.
- vii. JOHN, b. July 28, 1700.
- viii. ANNA, b. March 31, 1703; d. of smallpox, March 24, 1722.
- ix. ELIZABETH, b. Feb. 21, 1705-6.
- x. JOSEPH, b. Dec. 31, 1708; m. Rebecca Wheeler, Nov. 8, 1728.
- xi. ABIGAIL, b. Feb. 23, 1710-11; m. Thomas Mattocks, 1731.

4. THOMAS<sup>3</sup> FOSDICK (*John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born November 1, 1662. A sea captain. Married, May 16, 1695, Mary Martin, sister of the wife of his brother Stephen. She died November 20, 1717, aged 40 years. He died in 1725.

## Children:

- i. THOMAS,<sup>4</sup> b. June 13, 1697; d. prior to 1725.
- ii. MARY, b. July 30, 1699; baptized with her brother Thomas, March 10, 1699-1700.
- iii. SAMUEL, b. May 14, 1701. A caulker. Married and had a son, name unknown.
- iv. ELIZABETH, b. March 10, 1702-3; d. Aug. 27, 1704.
- v. ELIZABETH, baptized Dec. 30, 1705; m. Joseph Curtis.
- 6. vi. JAMES, date of birth unknown.
- vii. HANNAH, baptized Aug. 1, 1708; d. Nov. 1, 1708.
- viii. ANNE, b. March 11, 1711-12; d. July 14, 1711-12.
- ix. ANNE, baptized April 18, 1714.
- x. LYDIA, baptized May 27, 1716.

5. JONATHAN<sup>3</sup> FOSDICK (*John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born August 25, 1669. A caulker. Married Sarah Sprague who was admitted to the church (Charlestown), February 3, 1716-17.

## Children:

- i. SARAH,<sup>4</sup> b. April 30, 1693; m. Maximilian Dowse, 1721.
- ii. LYDIA, b. June 19, 1696; d. March 9, 1697-8.
- iii. ANN, b. Nov. 9, 1701; m. Jonathan Ramsdell, 1721.
- 7. iv. JONATHAN, b. Sept. 25, 1708.
- 8. v. BENJAMIN, b. Dec. 20, 1713.

6. JAMES<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), date of birth unknown. Lived in Boston—a paver by profession. Married (1) Hannah Boulle, July 14, 1729; she died August 6, 1736; (2) Mary Fosdick (line of descent unknown), October 4, 1739.

## Children (all by first wife):

- i. JOHN,<sup>5</sup> b. June 9, 1730.
  - 9. ii. JAMES, b. at Falmouth, Feb. 26, 1731-2.
  - 10. iii. THOMAS, b. May 29, 1733.
  - 11. iv. NATHANIEL, b. Nov. 26, 1734.
  - v. SARAH, b. July 17, 1736.
7. JONATHAN<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK (*Jonathan*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born September 25, 1708. Like his father before him he was a caulker by profession. Married Katherine Phillips, who owned the covenant May 28, 1732 (Charlestown). After his death, she married James Best (dates unknown).

## Children:

- i. JONATHAN or JOHN,<sup>5</sup> b. June 2, 1732; was undoubtedly the John Fosdick who settled in Nantucket; m. Elizabeth Norton, of Martha's Vineyard; d. 1809. (See below under heading: "The Nantucket Fosdicks," p. 149.)
  - ii. KATHERINE, baptized Feb. 2, 1734-5.
  - iii. SARAH, baptized March 12, 1738-9.
8. BENJAMIN<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK (*Jonathan*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born December 20, 1713. Married (1) Priscilla Gardner, of Nantucket, daughter of William and Priscilla; (2) Lydia Coffin, of Nantucket, daughter of John and Lydia. His first wife died in 1746, and, except for his son Benjamin, Jr., all his children were by his second wife. He was a carpenter by profession and lived on Nantucket, becoming the head of the second branch of the family that settled there. (See below under heading: "The Nantucket Fosdicks," p. 149.) The death of his mother, Sarah Sprague, is recorded in Nantucket, December 12, 1752. Obviously, therefore, Benjamin settled on the island some time prior to that date. He died in 1801. (His descendants, like those of John, above, are listed under the heading "The Nantucket Fosdicks.")
9. JAMES<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born at Falmouth, February 26, 1731-2. Lived in Boston, where in later years he had the designation "James Fosdick, gentleman." On December 28, 1758, he had printed an advertisement (signed "James Fosdick, Jr.") as follows:

Stolen out of the house of the Subscriber living at the South end of Boston on Monday evening last, a blue Damask Sack Gown with close Cuffs, lined with white stuff most to the top, a flowered silk Capuchin, with a Pink colour'd lining, a Garlick Shift with Holland Sleeves, a white Fustian Jacket without sleeves; also 15 dollars and a 50s. piece. Whoever will discover the Person or Persons that took the above things so that they may be brought to justice and convicted shall receive Ten Dollars as a Reward.

No further details of his life have been found.



10. THOMAS<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born May 29, 1733. Married Frances Hitchborn, who after his death married General Glover, a Revolutionary officer. Thomas was a boat builder and lived and died in Marblehead.

Children:

12. i. THOMAS,<sup>6</sup> b. in Boston, Dec. 28, 1756.  
 ii. JAMES, m. Ann Codman, at Portland, Me., Aug. 25, 1781. Had two daughters (names unknown).  
 13. iii. NATHANIEL, b. 1760.
11. NATHANIEL<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born November 26, 1734. A hatter in Boston. This is the Nathaniel who was a witness for the prosecution of the British soldiers in connection with the Boston Massacre of 1770. ("I came out of my house and saw the people running down-town and I followed them. . . . I went down to the middle of King Street and while I stood there was pushed from behind with a bayonet. I turned around and saw a party of soldiers. I asked one the reason of his pushing at me; he damned my blood and bid me stand out of their way. I said I would not, I was doing harm to no man, and would not stand aside for anyone, etc.") (Testimony of Nathaniel Fosdick: *Trial of the British Soldiers*, a pamphlet, 1807, p. 21.) No further details of Nathaniel's life are known.
12. THOMAS<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Boston, December 28, 1756. Married Mehitabel Hopkins, of Providence, R. I., January 21, 1781. Was Brigade Major and Ensign in the brigade of his stepfather, General Glover, during the Revolution. Moved to Portland, Me., where, with his brothers James and Nathaniel, he helped to form the first Episcopal church. Died at Portland, August 30, 1801.

Children:

- i. FRANCES,<sup>7</sup> b. in Providence, October 29, 1781; m. Benjamin Smith, March 1, 1803; d. in 1834.  
 ii. HENRY, b. in Providence, June 30, 1783; d. in Portland, Me., Aug. 20, 1806.  
 iii. THOMAS, b. Oct. 11, 1785; d. in Cuba while serving as U. S. Consul, July 12, 1814.
14. iv. JAMES WILLIAM, b. April 28, 1791.
13. NATHANIEL<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born 1760, at Marblehead, Mass. Graduated from Harvard, 1779. Moved to Portland, Me., where he married Abigail Jones, daughter of Ephraim Jones, in 1784. Collector of the Port there from 1787 to 1801. He was "a high-toned federalist" and was removed from office by President Jefferson to make way for one of the latter's followers. He

died in Salem, Mass., in 1819. His wife died in Boston in 1851, aged 91.

Children:

- i. WILLIAM.<sup>7</sup>
- ii. BENJAMIN, married Sophia Mitchell and moved to Savannah, Ga.

14. JAMES WILLIAM<sup>7</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>6</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Portland, Me., April 28, 1791. Married (1) Abby Comstock, May 5, 1814; she died October 11, 1816; (2) Maria Thurber.

Children:

- i. ABBY,<sup>8</sup> b. June 20, 1815; m. James B. James, by whom she had seven children, only two of whom are known (surname *James*):
  - 1. *Emele*,<sup>9</sup> m. Walter Gregory.
  - 2. *Clare*, m. Francis Bloodgood and lived at Morris Plains, N. Y.
- ii. THOMAS, b. in Providence, R. I., Oct. 11, 1816; m. Jane Grainger, Oct. 7, 1841. Moved to Louisville, Ky., where he engaged in business and made a large fortune; d. March 21, 1865. One child:
  - 1. *William H.*<sup>9</sup> Twice married: by his first wife he had several children, only one of whom, Edith (m. Temple Bodley, a lawyer of Louisville), lived to grow up. By second wife he had two daughters, names unknown.
- iii. EDWARD.
- iv. FRANCIS, d. young.
- v. JAMES, b. July 26, 1820; killed by a train July 9, 1864.

Children:

- 1. *Louis R.*<sup>9</sup> Was in the grocery business in Cincinnati.
- 2. *Philip C.* Lived in Cincinnati; a manufacturer of machinery.
- 3. *Lizzie*, m. Horace Wilson, a merchant.
- 4. *Emele*, m. Albert Kern.
- vi. MARY M., b. May 29, 1822; m. Daniel James, of Wilmington, Del., April 20, 1841. He d. April 23, 1889. One daughter, Helen, married and lived in Jersey City.
- vii. HENRY, b. Jan. 26, 1824; d. in Louisville, Ky., in 1862, leaving widow and no children.
- viii. GEORGE W., b. in Providence, R. I., Sept. 3, 1826; m. Annie Paxton. Lived in Louisville until 1884; later in Florida; d. Nov. 17, 1893. One child:
  - 1. *Charles P.*<sup>9</sup> b. in Louisville, Nov. 13, 1859. Lived in Florida, and later in Danville, Ky.
- ix. ANNIE, d. young.

### THE NANTUCKET FOSDICKS

As we have seen above (p. 147), two lines of the Fosdick family settled on the island of Nantucket, one established by Benjamin<sup>4</sup> Fosdick (*Jonathan*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>) and the other by his nephew Jonathan or John<sup>5</sup> Fosdick (*Jonathan*,<sup>4</sup> *Jonathan*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>). John Fosdick's mother was Katherine Phillips, and one of the cogent reasons for believing that the John Fosdick of Nantucket was the John or Jonathan of the mainland is the fact that he named one of his sons Phillips Fosdick and



one of his daughters Katherine. These given names he used in his will, dated September 3, 1809. (Nantucket Probate Records, 1809.)

John Fosdick probably followed his uncle to Nantucket somewhere around 1750. Members of both lines of the family—Benjamin's and John's—followed the sea, and for well over a century they served as masters and crewmen on whalers and clippers which spanned the five oceans. The old records relating to them recall the hazards of their occupation: "died single at sea," "died in West Indies," "died single in New Orleans," "died on passage to California," "he jumped overboard."

The paragraphs which follow present a skeleton outline of the two families, the material being based for the most part on the Folger and Barney Records, located in the Historical Museum in Nantucket.

### *The Children of Benjamin<sup>4</sup> Fosdick*

- i. BENJAMIN, JR.,<sup>5</sup> b. May 4, 1744; a sea captain; m. Mary Brock, a widow, dau. of Cromwell Coffin. Benjamin d. Nov. 28, 1824.  
Children:
  1. *Reuben*,<sup>6</sup> b. Oct. 19, 1778; m. Peggy Fitch, dau. of Eben and Abigail; he d. in Worcester, Mass., Jan. 29, 1849. Children: (1) Robert F.,<sup>7</sup> b. 1803; m. Mary Bunker; d. in Sutton, Mass., 1874. (2) George W., b. 1806; d. single, 1832.
  2. *Priscilla*, b. Dec. 30, 1780; m. Ariel Coffin, son of Samuel and Eunice; d. Dec. 27, 1820.
  3. *Obed*, m. Anna Bunker, dau. of Uriah and Peggy. No children.
- ii. SARAH or SALLY, b. Oct. 26, 1752; m. Jonathan Coffin, son of Robert and Susanna; d. 1839.
- iii. LYDIA, m. Henry Coffin, son of Henry and Mary; d. June 1, 1803.
- iv. PRISCILLA, b. July 13, 1756; d. single, July 17, 1835.
- v. ANN, b. March 8, 1758; d. single, April 23, 1834.
- vi. JAMES, mariner; d. single; his portrait—"Captain James Fosdick"—hangs in the Whaling Museum in Nantucket. It was painted in Liverpool, 1795.
- vii. PETER, b. Jan. 21, 1763; captain of the "Britannia"; m. Ruhannah Gardner, dau. of Caleb and Abigail; d. April 10, 1820.  
Children:
  1. *Sally*,<sup>8</sup> b. March 29, 1788; m. Jethro Barrett; d. June 19, 1818.
  2. *Deborah*, b. March 8, 1790; m. George Allen, son of Daniel and Phebe; d. Aug. 19, 1833.
  3. *Peter G.*, b. May 4, 1792; m. Emily Bigelow, dau. of James and Anna; d. Nov. 24, 1864. Children: (1) Charlotte Ann,<sup>9</sup> d. single, 1881; (2) Charles H., d. single; (3) Caroline, b. 1839, d. single, 1869.
  4. *Nancy*, b. April 21, 1794; m. James Drew, son of Gersham and Mary; d. "in New York State," July 7, 1880.
- viii. MARY, b. Dec. 21, 1766; m. Jonathan C. Rathbone, son of Coggeshall Rathbone; d. 1819. No children.
- ix. JETHRO, d. single at sea, July 17, 1835.

*The Children of John<sup>5</sup> Fosdick*

- i. MARY,<sup>6</sup> b. Nov. 21, 1755; m. David Chadwick, son of Richard and Deborah; no children; d. Jan. 20, 1844.
  - ii. JONATHAN, b. 1756; d. single, Aug. 21, 1797.
  - iii. JOHN, d. single..
  - 15. iv. WILLIAM, b. July 25, 1760.
  - v. DAVID, b. March 24, 1763; d. Jan. 23, 1830.
  - 16. vi. PHILLIPS or PHILIP, b. Sept. 15, 1764.
  - 17. vii. Jethro, date of birth not recorded.
  - viii. KATHERINE, b. Jan., 1768; m. Reuben Alley, son of Jacob and Eunice; d. Sept. 1, 1800.
  - ix. ELIZABETH, b. July 21, 1771; m. (1) Job Coleman, son of Enoch and Mary; (2) Albert Coffin, son of Brown and Deborah; d. May 3, 1857.
  - x. SALLY, b. Aug. 12, 1775; m. in 1793 David Pease, son of Elijah and Phebe; d. Dec. 25, 1838.
15. WILLIAM<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*John,<sup>5</sup> Jonathan,<sup>4</sup> Jonathan,<sup>3</sup> John,<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born on Nantucket, July 25, 1760. Commander of the ship "Industry." Married Mary Folger, daughter of Benjamin and Judith. Both the Folger and Barney records contain this sentence inscribed after the names of William's children: "This family removed to Indianna."
- Children (no dates given):
- i. LYDIA,<sup>7</sup> m. Aaron Stanton, son of William and Phebe.
  - ii. GEORGE, m. Mary Strong.
- Children:
- 1. *John.<sup>8</sup>*
  - 2. *Samuel.*
  - 3. *George W.*
  - 4. *Joseph*
  - 5. *Katherine.*
- iii. ELIZABETH, m. John Hughes.
  - iv. SALLY, m. George Speace.
  - v. WILLIAM, m. Gulielma Stanton, dau. of Latham and Huldah.
- Children:
- 1. *Doctor Albert C.,<sup>8</sup>* m. Eliza Bowman.
  - 2. *Anslam B.,* m. Laurinda Carson.
  - 3. *Benejiah S.,* m. Mary McDowel.
  - 4. *William,* m. Miriam Wickersham, dau. of Caleb and Lydia.
- vi. BENJAMIN F., m. (1) Elizabeth Stanton, dau. of Latham and Huldah; (2) Eunice Paddock, dau. of Charles and Olive.
- Children, by Elizabeth Stanton:
- 1. *William S.<sup>8</sup>*
  - 2. *Louisa,* m. G. Bunting.
- By Eunice Paddock:
- 3. *Lydia Ellen,* m. Benjamin Adler, "of Ind." Children (surname Adler): (1) Elmer Elsworth,<sup>9</sup> (2) George H., (3) Charles H., (4) Americus Vespuccius.
16. PHILLIPS or PHILIP<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*John,<sup>5</sup> Jonathan,<sup>4</sup> Jonathan,<sup>3</sup> John,<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born in Nantucket, September 15, 1764. Captain of the "Harriet." Married Hepsabeth Gardner, daughter of Francis and Anna. He was drowned November, 1809. According to the Barney record, "he jumped overboard."



## Children:

- i. FREDERICK,<sup>7</sup> b. Dec. 10, 1792; died single, April 17, 1864.
- ii. LUCRETIA, b. May 9, 1794; m. Peter Buckley.
- iii. ELISA, b. May 4, 1797; m. (1) George Sprague, son of John and Mary; (2) Beriah Weeks, of Maine. ("No children by the last.") She died in Maine, July 30, 1863.
- iv. JOHN P., b. June 7, 1799; d. single.
- v. ANN, b. Jan. 9, 1805; m. Isaac Gardner, son of Peleg and Hepsabeth; d. March 28, 1864.
- vi. HEPSABETH, b. March 1, 1806; m. Frederick Bunker, son of Christopher and Dinah; d. Aug. 25, 1864.

17. JETHRO<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*John*,<sup>5</sup> *Jonathan*,<sup>4</sup> *Jonathan*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), date of birth not recorded. A sea captain. Married Phebe Folger, daughter of Gilbert and Anna Folger, and died in the West Indies, date not recorded.

## Children:

- i. OBED,<sup>7</sup> b. Nov. 28, 1801. Captain of the whaler "Phoenix"; m. (1) Eliza Pinkham, dau. of Barzilla and Deborah; (2) Hannah Gardner, dau. of Oliver Cromwell Gardner and Hannah. Died at sea, somewhere in the Pacific, about 1849.

## Children:

- 1. *John B.*,<sup>8</sup> d. young.
- 2. *Oliver Gardner*, b. July 17, 1849.
- ii. CHARLES, b. Feb. 22, 1807; "a seafaring man"; m. Martha Gibbs, dau. of James and Martha; d. in Taunton, Mass., Jan. 5, 1874.

## Children:

- 1. *Martha*,<sup>8</sup> b. Jan. 1, 1840; m. Seth Shurtleff, of Carver, Mass., in 1862.
- 2. *Maria*, m. Frederic W. Ramsdell, son of John and Lavinia.
- 3. *Mary S.*, b. 1849; d. single in East Wareham, Mass.

18. OLIVER GARDNER<sup>8</sup> FOSDICK (*Obed*,<sup>7</sup> *Jethro*,<sup>6</sup> *John*,<sup>5</sup> *Jonathan*,<sup>4</sup> *Jonathan*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Nantucket, July 17, 1849. Ran away from home at the age of eleven, and at thirteen was a cabin boy on a whaler in the Bering Sea. At 25 he was captain of the "Louis A. Swett" in the Zanzibar trade. Retiring to Somerville, Mass., he was known affectionately to a generation of Harvard men as "Old Cap," being in charge of the night horse car from Boston to Cambridge. His stories of the adventures of his early youth, written in a quaint, original style, were widely published in local newspapers and magazines. He married (1) Mary Buck; (2) Rebecca Murray. He died in 1917.

## Children:

- i. CAROLYN,<sup>9</sup> graduated from Radcliffe College.
- ii. OLIVER GARDNER, JR., a linotypist; married Elizabeth Cooper; three children, names unknown.
- iii. CHARLES WHITMORE, m. Anna Irene Small, of Orleans, Mass.

## Children:

- 1. *Olive Byron*,<sup>10</sup> m. Harvey Iris, Jr., of N. Abington, Mass.
- 2. *Irene Eva*.
- 3. *Gladys*.
- 4. *Charles W.*, Jr.

## APPENDIX III

*The Children of Samuel<sup>3</sup> Fosdick I*

- i. SAMUEL<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK, b. Aug. 15, 1683; d. in infancy.
  - ii. SAMUEL FOSDICK, b. Sept. 18, 1684. The next lineal ancestor, designated as Samuel II. See Chapters X and XI, and Appendix IV.
  19. iii. MERCY FOSDICK, b. Nov. 30, 1686.
  - iv. RUTH FOSDICK, b. June 27, 1689; m. James Tilley, of New London; d. June 29, 1741.
  - v. ANNA FOSDICK, b. Dec. 8, 1691; m. Thomas Latham, of Groton, Conn.; died 1761.
  20. vi. JOHN or JONATHAN FOSDICK, b. Feb. 1, 1693-4.
  21. vii. THOMAS FOSDICK, b. Aug. 20, 1696.
  - viii. MARY FOSDICK, b. July 7, 1699; m. Richard Sutton, of Charlestown, Mass., 1719; d. there 1757.
19. MERCY<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK (*Samuel<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born in New London, November 30, 1686. Married (1) Thomas Jiggles, of Boston, October 13, 1708; (2) Thomas Morris, probably of New London. After the death of her first husband she returned to New London, and is mentioned in 1723 as having been assigned by vote of the town meeting to a proper seat in the church, in accordance with the peculiar regulations of the time for recognizing social distinction. ("Mercy Jiggles is by vote seated in the third seat on the woman's side where she is ordered by the town to sit.") In 1714 her brother, Samuel Fosdick II, posted a bond for the appearance of her husband in some action in New London. Jiggles apparently failed to appear, and suit was instituted against Samuel, who was forced to pay not only the amount of the bond but costs. (Court Records, New London County [Connecticut State Library], Vol. VIII, p. 250.)
- Children:
- i. MERCY,<sup>5</sup> m. John Trumbull; had three children, names unknown.
  20. JOHN or JONATHAN<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK (*Samuel<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born February 1, 1693-4. Moved to Guilford, Conn., and married Jane Bradley, becoming the head of the Guilford branch of the family. His house in North Guilford was standing until a few years ago. The author has been unable to trace this branch of the family, whose representatives lived in Guilford for well over a century. Lewis Fosdick's voluminous papers on this matter have been lost.
  21. DEACON THOMAS<sup>4</sup> FOSDICK (*Samuel<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born in New London, August 20, 1696. He apparently was sent to Charlestown, Mass., for his education, returning to New Lon-



don in 1717 at the age of 21. Samples of his handwriting which the author possesses show him to have been a superb penman. He was prominent in church affairs, and in 1724 the town meeting voted "that for the benefit of setting the psalm, Mr. Fosdick is seated in the third seat at the end next the altar." (Town Meeting Minutes, Jan. 13, 1723-4.) In 1732, at the age of 36, he was chosen a deacon of the church, and he is the Deacon Thomas Fosdick who figured so conspicuously in the church and civic life of New London from 1724 until his death in 1774. Like his father before him, he was a member of the General Court in Hartford (in 1740 and 1745), and he took a prominent part in the community in relation to the French War in 1744. (Caulkins: p. 389.) In every respect he was a far more creditable member of the family than was his older brother, Samuel II. He inherited from his father the property on the waterfront of New London that today runs between Tilley Street and Golden Street, and there he built a spacious home, which at his death was inherited by his son, Dr. Thomas Fosdick. He married (1) Esther Updike, daughter of Lodowick Updike, June 24, 1720; she died August 10, 1753; (2) Grace Miner, daughter of Clement Miner, September 2, 1755. After Deacon Fosdick's death, she married Ezekiel Fox and died December 3, 1801, aged 84. She was buried in ye Ancientest Burial Place in New London in the same grave with her first husband. (Family record.) The deacon died July 17, 1774, aged 78, leaving a sizeable estate estimated at £1437, including 623 acres now largely in the center of New London. In this acreage was the property where the Second Burial Ground was later located, today known as Williams Memorial Park.

#### Children:

By Esther Updike.

- i. ESTHER,<sup>5</sup> b. April 30, 1722; d. July 18, 1736.
22. ii. THOMAS, b. April 30, 1725.
- iii. KATHERINE, b. Feb. 7, 1726-7; m. George Richards, Dec. 21, 1747.
- iv. SARAH, b. April 9, 1730; m. Nicoll Havens, son of Jonathan and Caroline; d. Aug. 4, 1787.

Children (surname *Havens*):

1. Jonathan,<sup>6</sup> d. Oct. 24, 1779.

By Grace Miner.

23. v. CLEMENT, b. Sept. 23, 1756.
- vi. SAMUEL, b. Dec. 29, 1757; m. (first name unknown) Turner; built the Trott house on State Street, New London; d. in North Carolina, 1788. (See footnote, p. 74; also p. 97.)
- vii. GRACE, b. May 3, 1759; m. Ezekiel Beckwith.

22. THOMAS<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born April 30, 1725. Graduated from Yale University in 1746 and became a practicing physician in New London. Married, November 28, 1748, Anna Havens, daughter of Jona-

than and Caroline, and sister of Nicoll Havens, who married Thomas' sister Sarah. Served as surgeon at the Battle of Lexington, and later in the year, in the same capacity, in Col. Parson's regiment. Died April, 1776, at the age of 51; his wife, Anna, died at Shelter Island, N. Y., September 4, 1782.

Children:

- i. NICOLL,<sup>6</sup> b. April 18, 1750; m. Abigail, daughter of Charles Eldridge, Jan. 7, 1784. As Captain Fosdick he was at the Siege of Boston and later he served brilliantly as a privateersman, raiding British shipping in Long Island Sound. Died January 1, 1821, at North Stonington, Conn., following a fall from a horse.

Children:

24.
  1. *Nicoll*,<sup>7</sup> b. Nov. 9, 1785.
  2. *Lodowick*, b. Feb. 27, 1788; m. Elizabeth T. Smith, May 12, 1811; he d. July 14, 1826; she d. Feb. 9, 1853.
  3. *Abigail*, b. March 8, 1790; m. John Billing, July 24, 1811; d. at Trenton, N. J., Aug., 1813.
  4. *Charles*, b. Jan. 7, 1793.
  5. *Thomas*, b. 1795; died as an infant.
  6. *Mary Ann*, b. Aug. 19, 1796; m. Thomas Mussey, of Exeter, Me., May 16, 1817.
  7. *Frances Eliza*, b. Jan. 7, 1801; m. George Jones, Jan. 7, 1801; four children, (surname *Jones*): three sons and a daughter; oldest son, John Elcock; family moved to Newfield, Tompkins County, N. Y.
  8. *Gloriana*, b. Jan. 7, 1803.
- ii. MARY ANN, b. Feb. 19, 1752; d. as a child.
25. iii. THOMAS UPDIKE, b. March 6, 1754.
- iv. LODOWICK, b. July 9, 1756; d. Sept. 18, 1773.
- v. JONATHAN, b. May 5, 1758; d. as a child.
- vi. FRANCIS, b. March 28, 1760; d. as a child.
- vii. GILES, b. May 13, 1762; d. as a child.
- viii. FRANCES, b. April 10, 1764; d. Nov. 30, 1790.
26. ix. RICHARD, b. Nov. 28, 1765.
- x. ANNA, b. May 23, 1769; m. Henry Packer Dering (or Deering), Dec. 22, 1793.
- xi. JOSEPH, d. as a child.

23. CLEMENT<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in New London, September 23, 1756. Married (1) Eunice Way, daughter of Lieut. Thomas Way, October 15, 1778; she died December 21, 1785; ("She is buried with her daughter Frances on my farm about 20 rods North East of my now dwelling house"—Clement Fosdick's Family Bible\*); (2) Clarine Smith, daughter of Capt. Stephen Smith, of Lyme, October 22, 1786; she died April 8, 1787; ("Buried at the old Niantick meeting house in Lyme."); (3) Lovey Beebe, daughter of Captain Abijah Beebe, January 6, 1789. The date of Clement's death is not known.

Children:

By Eunice Way.

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\* In possession of author.



- i. THOMAS,<sup>9</sup> b. July 14, 1779.
- ii. LODOWICK, b. April 3, 1781.
- iii. FRANCES or FANNY, b. May 22, 1783; d. 1785.
- iv. CLEMENT WAY, b. Dec. 15, 1785.

By Lovey Beebe.

- v. SAMUEL, b. Sept. 9, 1789; d. in Augusta, Ga., Sept. 9, 1822.
- vi. FRANCES, b. July 31, 1791.
- vii. EUNICE, b. Feb. 7, 1793.
- viii. CLARINE, b. Nov. 8, 1795; d. 1796.
- ix. RICHARD, b. Sept. 10, 1797.
- x. EDWIN, b. Oct. 9, 1799.
- xi. HENRY, b. July 10, 1801; d. in infancy.
- xii HENRY, b. August 10, 1804; d. in infancy.

24. NICOLL<sup>7</sup> FOSDICK (*Nicoll*,<sup>6</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in New London, November 9, 1785. At the age of fifteen he removed to Herkimer County, New York State, where, in 1816, he was chosen one of the Presidential electors, and cast a vote for James Madison for President. He was a member of the State Legislature in 1818 and 1819; and in 1826 was elected to Congress from Lawrence County, N. Y. He returned to New London in 1843, and in 1849 was appointed Collector of Customs for the port of New London under President Taylor's administration, serving for four years. He died May 7, 1868, leaving no children.

25. THOMAS UPDIKE<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born March 6, 1754. Married Sarah Howe, June 17, 1783. Served as an ensign in Capt. Nathan Hale's Company in the Revolution and participated in the daring attempt to set fire to the British frigate "Phoenix" in the Hudson River in 1776. Was captured by the British at Fort Washington, and his subsequent confinement in the old prison ship "Jersey" broke his constitution. "He was 6 ft. 2 in. high, a likely, handsome man, and had courage and prudence equal to his strength." (Family record.) He died, a cripple, on Shelter Island, Aug. 14, 1811.

One child:

- i. THOMAS UPDIKE, JR.,<sup>7</sup> b. April 19, 1784; m. Rachel Armstrong, Oct. 9, 1804.

Children:

- 1. Orville,<sup>8</sup> b. Nov. 19, 1805; m. Hannah McColloch, June 11, 1845. A son, Richard Calvin<sup>9</sup> Fosdick, b. at Butler, Ind., May 20, 1850; m. Mary E. Mullin at Wabasha, Minn., and later lived in St. Paul, Minn.

26. RICHARD<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born November 28, 1765. Married Phebe L'Hommedieu, of Sag Harbor, L. I. Moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1810, and died there August 20, 1837. Richard's family seems to have been the second Fosdick family to settle in Cincinnati, the other being, as we have seen (p. 149), the children of

James William<sup>7</sup> Fosdick (*Thomas*,<sup>6</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *James*,<sup>4</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>).

Children (all except the last born in New London):

i. THOMAS RICHARD,<sup>7</sup> b. June 27, 1797; d. Aug. 1, 1829, at Sag Harbor, L. I.

ii. SYLVESTER L'HOMMEDIEU, b. May 6, 1799; m. Harriet Raymond.

One son:

27. 1. *Charles Raymond*,<sup>8</sup> b. Sag Harbor, Jan. 4, 1826.

iii. SAMUEL, b. March 21, 1801. Went to Cincinnati, where he was very successful in business.

iv. ANNA SYBIL, b. Feb. 23, 1803; m. (first name unknown) Mason; d. Cincinnati, May 22, 1824.

v. BETSY ELIZA, b. Feb. 9, 1805; m. (first name unknown) Aydelott; d. March 6, 1890.

vi. HENRY NICOLL, b. Sept. 1, 1808; d. Sept. 6, 1841. His son, Sylvester, was in the Confederate army, and the late Robert C. Fosdick, of Mobile, Ala., was a grandson.

vii. CHARLES UPDIKE, b. in Sag Harbor, May 15, 1815; d. Cincinnati, Jan. 6, 1835.

27. CHARLES RAYMOND<sup>8</sup> FOSDICK (*Sylvester*,<sup>7</sup> *Richard*,<sup>6</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>5</sup> *Thomas*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born at Sag Harbor, January 4, 1826. Married Fannie B. (last name unknown). While still a boy his family removed to Cincinnati, where, after a college career, he entered business (at first with his uncle Samuel), and became one of the most prominent citizens of the city. Member of the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, he was sent, with physicians and nurses, to gather up the wounded after the Battle of Shiloh. Appointed Assessor of Internal Revenue at Cincinnati, he was later with the War Department in Washington, D. C., where he died December 8, 1896.

One child, a son:

i. DERING,<sup>9</sup> m. Elise Whiting, daughter of Commander Wm. D. Whiting, U. S. N.; d. 1896.



## APPENDIX IV

*The Children of Samuel<sup>4</sup> Fosdick II*

- i. MERCY<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK, b. 1707 in New London; m. Samuel Wolcott, of Boston, 1725.
- ii. MARY FOSDICK, b. March 28, 1708, in New London.
- iii. SAMUEL FOSDICK, b. March 11, 1710, in New London. The next lineal ancestor, designated as Samuel III. See Chapters XII, XIII, and XIV, and Appendix V.
- iv. WILLIAM FOSDICK, b. Feb. 4, 1712-13, in New London; m. Susanna White, 1732; d. about 1736. His wife, "widow," was admitted to church Feb. 7, 1741.

## Children:

- 1. *Susanna*,<sup>6</sup> b. Oct. 8, 1733; m. John Stimpson, Jan. 30, 1751-2.
- 2. *William*, b. May 16, 1735; m. Mary Burrough at Sutton, Mass.
- 3. *Mary*, baptized Aug. 8, 1736.
- v. RUTH FOSDICK, b. Jan. 25, 1713-14, in New London; baptized Feb. 7 of same year.
- 28. vi. JAMES FOSDICK, b. Nov. 20, 1716, in New London.
- 29. vii. EZEKIEL FOSDICK, b. Feb. 17, 1719-20, in Charlestown.
- viii. JESSE FOSDICK, b. in Charlestown, Nov. 7, 1722; d. 1790.
- ix. SUSANNAH FOSDICK, b. in Charlestown, Oct. 11, 1724; m. Samuel Frothingham, son of Deacon Samuel Frothingham, 1747; d. 1801.

Children (surname *Frothingham*):

- 1. *Susannah*<sup>6</sup>.
  - 2. *Samuel*.
28. JAMES<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in New London, November 20, 1716, and moved with his father to Charlestown about 1717 or 1718. He was by trade a cardmaker—making wool-carders for the manufacture of wool. His wife was Elizabeth Darling, whom he married December 6, 1735, at Boston, and who was admitted to the Charlestown church January 11, 1741. He seems to have been the last recorded owner in the Fosdick family of the property on Sconce Point, which he had inherited from his father, and which, according to the will of Stephen Fosdick, his great-great-grandfather, was "to run in the generations of the Fosdicks forever." James died October 16, 1784, and with his wife, who died fifteen years later, he was buried in the "Old Burying Ground" of Charlestown. Their grave-stones, standing in 1852, have now disappeared. The inventory of his estate showed him to have been in very comfortable circumstances.

## Children:

- i. ABIGAIL,<sup>6</sup> b. 1736; m. (1) Solomon Phipps, 1754; (2) James Brazier, 1767.
- ii. ELIZABETH, b. 1737; m. Edward Tenney (Penney ?), 1761.
- 30. iii. JAMES, b. 1739.
- iv. WILLIAM, baptized 1741. "Served 3 years in the 16th Regiment, Fox's Company. Claimed for loss, 1775." (Family record.)
- v. RUTH.
- vi. MARY.
- vii. RUTH.
- viii. MARY.
- ix. THOMAS, m. Abigail Edes, Feb. 17, 1777, in Boston; d. prior to 1800.
- x. JESSE, b. about 1755. "Served 33 months, 27 days in Frothingham's Company in the Revolution. Reenlisted Jan. 9, 1781 for 3 years." (Family record.)
- 31. xi. DAVID, b. April 27, 1757.
- xii. SARAH.
- 29. EZEKIEL<sup>5</sup> FOSDICK (*Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born February 17, 1719-20, in Charlestown, Mass. By trade he was a cardmaker. In 1740 he moved to New London, and in 1742 settled in Wethersfield, Conn., where he founded the Wethersfield branch of the family. He married (1) Abigail Wright; she died November 7, 1755, aged 31; (2) Anna Stillman Welles, whom he married September 22, 1756; she died December 27, 1808. Ezekiel died in Wethersfield, January 2, 1786.

## Children, thirteen in number:

By Abigail Wright.

- i. ABIGAIL,<sup>6</sup> b. Dec. 10, 1745.
- ii. CLARINDA, b. March 9, 1748; m. Timothy Harrison, of Branford, Jan. 28, 1776; one child known, named Fosdick Harrison.
- iii. ALVIN, b. March 9, 1750.
- iv. RHODA, b. Nov. 17, 1751.

By Anna Stillman Welles.

- v. EZEKIEL, b. Sept. 19, 1757.
- 32. vi. WILLIAM, b. Aug. 9, 1759.
- vii. ANNA, b. July 20, 1761.
- viii. SUSANNAH, b. June 10, 1763.
- ix. SARAH, b. May 10, 1766.
- x. RUTH, b. Oct. 1, 1768.
- xi. ELIZABETH, b. June 15, 1772.
- xii. MARY, b. July 27, 1774.
- xiii. SAMUEL, b. June 3, 1778; d. at Guadeloupe, West Indies, Dec. 25, 1799.

- 30. JAMES<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*,<sup>1</sup>), born in Charlestown, 1739; (baptized there June 3 of that year). He married (1) Mercy Collis, September 23, 1762; (2) Mary Thornton. His death is not recorded.



## Children (all by his first wife):

- i. MERCY,<sup>7</sup> b. 1763; m. John Vose and moved to Concord, Mass., where she made a home for her stepmother, Mary Thornton, after the death of her father.
- ii. SARAH, b. 1765.
- iii. ABIGAIL, b. 1767.
- iv. ELIZABETH, b. 1769.

31. DAVID<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*James,<sup>5</sup> Samuel II,<sup>4</sup> Samuel I,<sup>3</sup> John,<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born in Charlestown, April 27, 1757. He followed the same business his father pursued, i.e., cardmaking. On August 26, 1779, he married Mary Frothingham, daughter of Deacon James Frothingham, of Charlestown, a descendant of one of the early settlers of the town. She lived to be 87, and died March 29, 1848, her twin sister, Lucy, surviving her only a few months. He died January 16, 1812.

## Children, twelve in number:

- i. MARY,<sup>7</sup> b. July 5, 1780; m. William Fuller.
- ii. SARAH, b. March 28, 1782; m. William Porter; d. 1829.
- iii. ABIGAIL T., b. March 12, 1784; d. Dec. 9, 1800.
- 33. iv. DAVID, b. June 18, 1786.
- 34. v. JAMES, b. Jan. 8, 1789.
- vi. ELIZABETH, b. May 6, 1791; m. Nathaniel Ayer; d. April 26, 1855.
- vii. HANNAH, b. May 19, 1793; m. William Ayer; d. Aug. 18, 1857.
- viii. HEPSIBAH, b. July 16, 1795; m. Leonard Tufts.
- ix. JOHN, b. March 27, 1798; m. Deborah Frothingham.
- x. DANIEL, b. Dec. 31, 1800; a cordwainer; m. Julia Holbrook; d. March 26, 1852.
- xi. STEPHEN, b. April 9, 1803; m. Abigail Thayer; d. April 19, 1869.
- xii. ABIGAIL, b. May 9, 1806; m. Francis Raymond; d. Nov. 28, 1863.

32. WILLIAM<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK (*Ezekiel,<sup>5</sup> Samuel II,<sup>4</sup> Samuel I,<sup>3</sup> John,<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born in Wethersfield, August 9, 1759. He was a soldier in the Revolution from the Lexington Alarm to the close of the war. Married Anna (or Anner) Robbins, who died May 21, 1811, from poison taken by mistake for magnesia. He died before November, 1796.

## Children:

- i. WILLIAM,<sup>7</sup> m. Cornelia Clinton Paxton; d. Oct. 2, 1831.
- ii. EZEKIEL, moved to Cincinnati, and became the third representative of the family in that area. (See p. 156.)
- iii. NANCY, m. (1) Ebenezer Belden; (2) Daniel Hatch.
- 35. iv. GEORGE, b. Oct. 29, 1787.
- v. ANNA, m. (1) Jesse Crane; (2) Benjamin Franklin Hidell.
- vi. HORACE, d. of lockjaw, Aug. 8, 1812.

33. DAVID<sup>7</sup> FOSDICK (*David,<sup>6</sup> James,<sup>5</sup> Samuel II,<sup>4</sup> Samuel I,<sup>3</sup> John,<sup>2</sup> Stephen<sup>1</sup>*), born in Charlestown, June 18, 1786. He was a drygoods merchant, and a member of the Massachusetts legislature from Charlestown in 1833, 1835, and 1836. About 1838 he moved to Groton, Mass., where he became a farmer. He was a deacon of the Baptist church for many years. A daughter, Adelaide, wrote of him: "He was a reader and a

thinker and in his prime took a leading position in his church and in his immediate circle without greater advantages than the common schools." (Family record.) He married (1) Joan Skilton, of Billerica, June 19, 1810; she died October 31, 1825; (2) Lucy Wyman, March 21, 1826; she died February 1, 1834; (3) Mary Harkness Smiley, October 9, 1834; she died June 25, 1864. David died in Groton, May 29, 1872, aged 86.

Children, sixteen in number:

By Joan Skilton.

- i. DAVID,<sup>8</sup> b. April 29, 1811; d. March 3, 1812.
36. ii. DAVID, b. Nov. 9, 1813.
- iii. MARY, b. May 27, 1815; d. June 9, 1824.
- iv. SARAH, b. May 27, 1815 (a twin of Mary); m. John Tarbell, of Groton, June 10, 1847; d. June 19, 1882.
- v. Unknown, died in infancy.
- vi. JOAN, b. Oct. 18, 1818; m. Theodore H. Lunt, Jan. 6, 1841; d. March 21, 1897.
37. vii. HENRY MARTYN, b. Dec. 22, 1822.

By Lucy Wyman.

- viii. SAMUEL PUTNAM, b. Dec. 30, 1826; d. Feb. 8, 1879; unmarried.
  - ix. LUCY WYMAN, b. July 2, 1828; d. Oct. 13, 1861.
  - x. MARY, b. March 13, 1830; m. Alonzo W. Hildreth, May 20, 1851; d. May 21, 1858.
  - xi. PALMELIA SKILTON, b. Dec. 15, 1832; d. May 6, 1833.
- By Mary Harkness Smiley.
- xii. PAMELIA TARBELL, b. Sept. 9, 1835; m. Moses Fuller, Jr., June 9, 1858; d. March 16, 1926, in Watertown, Mass.
  - xiii. JAMES SMILEY, b. Dec. 9, 1837; d. Sept. 12, 1838.
  - xiv. ELIZABETH HARKNESS, b. May 29, 1840; m. John H. Huntington, widower; d. Nov. 16, 1887, at Troy, N. Y.; no children.
  - xv. ADELAIDE LANE, b. Jan. 29, 1844; m. Rev. C. J. Baldwin, Aug. 3, 1870; was living at Granville, Ohio, in 1893.
  - xvi. JAMES SMILEY, b. Jan. 2, 1847; d. April 5, 1871; unmarried.

34. JAMES<sup>7</sup> FOSDICK (*David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born January 8, 1789. Married (1) Sophia Goodell, February 10, 1811; (2) Abbie Walker Lincoln, Oct. 3, 1833.

Children:

By Sophia Goodell

- i. SOPHIA ANN,<sup>8</sup> b. May 26, 1812; m. Thomas Knight, April 23, 1832; d. April 6, 1848.
- ii. JAMES, b. Sept. 20, 1813; d. Nov. 6, 1876.
- iii. ELIZABETH, b. June 18, 1815; m. Josiah Wilder, May 13, 1835.
- iv. MARTHA, b. March 9, 1817; m. William Hunt, of Liberty, Maine, July 1, 1838; d. Jan. 4, 1848.
- v. LUCY D., b. Oct. 30, 1819; m. Augustus Hunt, brother of Martha's husband, Oct. 4, 1843; d. June 28, 1890.
- vi. WILLIAM, b. May 7, 1821; m. Elizabeth T. Pierce, Sept. 12, 1844, at Boston, Mass.; d. July 23, 1893.

Children:

1. Abby Elizabeth,<sup>9</sup> b. Sept. 1, 1847; d. Sept. 5, 1849.



2. *Elizabeth M.*, b. June 7, 1850; m. Walter B. Adams, Oct. 16, 1873, at Boston, Mass.
3. *Georgiana F.*, b. April 17, 1854; m. George P. Bingham, Nov. 14, 1878, in Brookline, Mass.
38. 4. *J. William*, b. Feb. 13, 1858.
- vii. HENRY J., b. Oct. 5, 1822, at Liberty, Maine.  
By Abbie Walker Lincoln
- viii. MARY ABBY, b. Oct. 24, 1834; d. Nov. 10, 1837.
- ix. LINCOLN, b. Oct. 18, 1835; d. Oct. 16, 1836.
- x. LINCOLN, b. Oct. 8, 1838; d. June 8, 1843.
- xi. GEORGE F., b. Aug. 24, 1841; m. Sarah E. Clough, May 4, 1864.  
Five daughters, names unknown.
35. GEORGE<sup>7</sup> FOSDICK (*William*,<sup>6</sup> *Ezekiel*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Wethersfield, Conn., October 29, 1787. Married, at Norfolk, Conn., 1816, to Rachel Parrot. Moved to Sandisfield, in Berkshire County, Mass. He and his wife both died in New Boston, a village of Sandisfield: he, July 23, 1871, and she, October 25, 1865.  
Children:
  - i. ROBBINS ITHAMAR,<sup>8</sup> b. Sandisfield; a harness-maker; m. Lucinda Collins, of Ansonia, Conn., Sept. 25, 1849; d. 1900.  
Children:
    1. *Anna*,<sup>9</sup> b. March 13, 1854; m. Edward Twining.
    2. *Amanda*, b. Dec. 11, 1855; m. Alonzo Merrill; lived in Westfield, Mass. Children (surname *Merrill*): (1) *Minnie*,<sup>10</sup> m. Arthur Sherman; (2) Frank, who lived at Westfield, Mass.
  39. 3. *Horace G.*, b. March 24, 1859.
  4. *William Franklin*, b. Dec. 25, 1863; d. June, 1881; unmarried.
  40. 5. *George Robbins*, b. April 6, 1869.
  - ii. CATHERINE L., m. Julius Mansfield, Dec. 31, 1838, at Sandisfield.  
Children (surname *Mansfield*):
    1. *James*.<sup>9</sup>
    2. Perhaps others not known.
  - iii. Probably other children not known.
36. DAVID<sup>8</sup> FOSDICK (*David*,<sup>7</sup> *David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Charlestown, November 9, 1813. He was educated at Bradford Academy and at Amherst College, where he graduated in 1831 at the age of eighteen. After a few years of teaching he entered the Andover Theological Seminary and then became minister of the Unitarian Church at Sterling, Mass. In 1846 he went to the Hollis Street Unitarian Church in Boston, and in 1848 removed to Groton, Mass., where he preached at South Groton (now Ayer) until 1860. Six feet in height, he was a man of commanding presence. He was naturally a linguist, and could read readily in thirteen languages. He translated several works from German and French, and published a French grammar, a German grammar, and a German dictionary which were standard textbooks in their day. He gradually withdrew from participation in active life, and, with a

modest fortune brought to him by his first wife, "he lived alone in companionship with his books, of which he had collected a library of some 2,000 volumes." (Family record.) He married (1) Sarah Lawrence Woodbury, daughter of Rev. Samuel Woodbury, of Groton, March 10, 1841; she died November 25, 1860; (2) Mary Jane Applin, January 28, 1871; she died June 10, 1879. He died January 28, 1892.

Children (all by first wife):

- i. SAMUEL WOODBURY,<sup>9</sup> b. in Sterling, Mass., Dec. 10, 1841; m. Christine Dakin Caryl, Feb. 18, 1865; d. April 3, 1865.
  - ii. MARY, b. in Sterling, Mass., Feb. 19, 1844; d. in Groton, March 11, 1907.
  - iii. GEORGE, b. in Boston, Jan. 14, 1846; d. Oct. 4, 1848.
  41. iv. CHARLES, b. in Groton, March 9, 1848.
  42. v. FREDERICK, b. April 24, 1850.
  - vi. DAVID, b. Dec. 14, 1852; d. Dec. 21, 1854.
  - vii. ROSE, b. July 24, 1855; d. July 15, 1870.
  - viii. LUCY, b. Nov. 21, 1858; m. Dr. Charles Sedgwick Minot, June 1, 1889; d. Nov. 19, 1914.
  - ix. SARAH WOODBURY, b. Nov. 4, 1860; d. in Cambridge, June 7, 1929.
37. HENRY MARTYN<sup>8</sup> FOSDICK (*David*,<sup>7</sup> *David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Charlestown, Mass., December 22, 1822. A civil engineer. Married Lucy A. Hollis, Nov. 27, 1847. In 1861 he moved west to Booneville, Colo., where he surveyed and laid out the sites of Denver, Colorado City, and several other towns. He died in Booneville (or Palmer?), Colo., October 5, 1899.

Children:

- i. HENRY MARTYN, JR.,<sup>9</sup> b. April 5, 1849, in Boston, Mass.; m. Sarah Ann Hughes, of St. Louis, Sept. 6, 1882.

Children:

1. *David Hughes*,<sup>10</sup> b. Aug. 2, 1883, at Fowler, Colo.; m. Zenith Justice, March 8, 1908. Children: (1) Henry Justice,<sup>11</sup> b. Nov. 20, 1909; (2) Frank David, b. Jan. 7, 1913; (3) Nadyne, b. Jan. 15, 1916; (4) Clifford Martyn, b. Jan. 21, 1923.
2. *Lucy D.*, b. Oct. 6, 1885; d. July 9, 1887.
3. *Josephine*, b. July 9, 1890; m. M. V. Danford, Dec. 14, 1910.

Children (surname *Danford*):

- (1) Mildred Maxine,<sup>11</sup> b. Feb. 23, 1912;
  - (2) Stuart F., b. Nov. 14, 1920.
  4. *Raymond Patterson*, b. Nov. 3, 1895; m. Viola Skinkle, June 1, 1918, at Taos, N. M.
  5. *Amy Gladys*, b. Nov. 21, 1897; m. H. A. Webster, Jr., at Fowler, Colo., June 16, 1918.
- ii. LUCY HENRIETTA, b. Nov. 27, 1850. Her reminiscences, "Across the Plains in '61," were published in the *New England Magazine* in March, 1905.
  - iii. SUSAN H., b. Feb. 13, 1852; m. A. G. Boone; lived at Pueblo, Colo.
  - iv. SAMUEL PUTNAM, b. Feb. 11, 1854.
  - v. MARY ELLEN, b. Oct. 1, 1862.
  - vi. FRANK, b. Aug. 25, 1864.
  - vii. WILLIAM, b. Sept. 11, 1867; d. June 19, 1887.



38. J. WILLIAM<sup>9</sup> FOSDICK (*William*,<sup>8</sup> *James*,<sup>7</sup> *David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Charlestown, Mass., February 13, 1858. Mural painter and founder of the art of fire etching in America. He was trained at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts before going to Paris, where for seven years he studied under Boulanger, Lefebvre, Collin, and other masters of that period. His best known mural is perhaps "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." "The Adoration of St. Joan" is in the National Gallery in Washington, D. C. He married Gertrude Christian, sculptress and authoress, October 22, 1890. One daughter, Christian Fosdick, born 1898.
39. HORACE G.<sup>9</sup> FOSDICK (*Robbins Ithamar*,<sup>8</sup> *George*,<sup>7</sup> *William*,<sup>6</sup> *Ezekiel*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born at Sandisfield, Mass., March 24, 1859. At the age of fourteen, he went to Derby, Conn., and later to nearby Ansonia, where he engaged successfully in business for the balance of his life, ending his career as president of the Fosdick Motor Car Company. On May 5, 1887, he married Katie Vandercook, of Albany. He died in Ansonia, November 30, 1934.

Children:

- i. HORACE GEORGE,<sup>10</sup> b. Aug. 28, 1888; m. Maude P. Buck, April 21, 1915.

Children:

1. *Horace G.*, 3rd,<sup>11</sup> b. Jan. 20, 1918.
  2. *Franklin Lawrence*, b. Sept. 12, 1919.
  3. *Raymond Warren*, b. Jan. 14, 1921.
  4. *Harry Edwin*, b. Feb. 28, 1926.
  5. *Lois Ethel*, b. Jan. 21, 1930; d. Jan. 23, 1930.
- ii. WILLARD A., b. Nov. 1, 1890; m. Irene Kempf, Dec. 16, 1915.

Children:

1. *Willard Horace*,<sup>11</sup> b. Nov. 8, 1916.
  2. *Ruth Jane*, b. Oct. 13, 1919.
  3. *Audrey Jean*, b. Sept. 6, 1922.
  4. *Virginia Ann* (twin of above), b. Sept. 6, 1922.
- iii. ANNIE LUCINDA, b. July 10, 1895; m. Burton W. Porter, of Chester, Conn., Aug. 9, 1916; d. Dec. 10, 1937. (One son, died in infancy.)
- iv. LOTTIE MAY, b. July 25, 1897; m. Lincoln Stewart, April 24, 1925.
- v. CHARLES H., b. Sept. 30, 1899; m. Annette Boyle, May 17, 1928.

Children:

1. *Shirley Ann*,<sup>11</sup> b. July 28, 1931.
2. *Joan Elizabeth*, b. Aug. 15, 1933.

40. GEORGE ROBBINS<sup>9</sup> FOSDICK (*Robbins Ithamar*,<sup>8</sup> *George*,<sup>7</sup> *William*,<sup>6</sup> *Ezekiel*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Sandisfield, Mass., April 6, 1869. Followed his brother Horace to Derby and Ansonia, Conn., where he became superintendent of the electric power line. Later moved to Winchester, New Hampshire. Married Mary Jane Kneen, July 24, 1890.

## Children:

- i. GEORGE RAYMOND,<sup>10</sup> b. Jan. 22, 1892; m. Ida May Kendrick, June 24, 1920.

## Children:

1. *Charlotte*,<sup>11</sup> b. March 30, 1921.
  2. *George Warren*, b. Feb. 1, 1924.
  3. *Theron David*, b. Oct. 18, 1925.
  4. *Howard Jason*, b. May 20, 1932.
- ii. WILLIAM FRANKLIN, b. July 5, 1895; m. Jennie Willard, Oct. 1916.
- iii. CLARENCE ROBBINS, b. Nov. 27, 1897; m. Marjorie Manning, Oct. 16, 1931.

## Children:

1. *Irene May*,<sup>11</sup> b. July 15, 1932.
  2. *Janice Mary*, b. Oct. 18, 1934.
  3. *Carolyn*, b. Dec. 22, 1935.
- iv. MABEL AMANDA, b. Nov. 23, 1899; m. Clarence W. Gray, June 22, 1922.

## Children (surname Gray):

1. *Sylvia Mary*,<sup>11</sup> b. Nov. 22, 1923.
  2. *Elaine Mabel*, b. Sept. 19, 1925.
- v. SUSAN LUCINDA, b. Aug. 12, 1902; m. Austin Ware, 1922.

## Children (surname Ware):

1. *Thurley Janice*,<sup>11</sup> b. July 9, 1923.
  2. *Herbert F.*, b. July 18, 1929.
- vi. HAROLD K., b. June 20, 1906; m. Dorris Thomas, Jan. 21, 1931.

41. CHARLES<sup>9</sup> FOSDICK (*David*,<sup>8</sup> *David*,<sup>7</sup> *David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born in Groton, Mass., March 9, 1848. His entire education was received at the hands of his scholarly father, and together with his brothers Samuel and Frederick and his sister Mary he never attended a public school. He began his business career in Fitchburg, Mass., and served in many capacities in relation to the general field of automatic drills and steam engines, ending his life as superintendent of the Fitchburg Steam Engine Company. He was prominent in church and civic affairs, and was president of the Common Council of the city in 1886 at the same time that his brother Frederick was serving as mayor. Deeply interested in the genealogy of the family, he gave a great deal of his spare time to research and correspondence, and his papers, generously shared, have proved of invaluable assistance in unravelling the intricacies of relationship. He married Mary Louise Snow, of Fitchburg, Mass., on October 1, 1874. He died in Fitchburg, June 10, 1925.

## Children:

- i. MARGARET WILLIS,<sup>10</sup> b. Aug. 1, 1875. Connected for many years with the Public Library of Fitchburg, Mass.
- ii. CHARLES MUSSEY, b. Nov. 15, 1877; graduated from the Mass. Institute of Technology, 1900; d. Dec. 6, 1908.
- iii. ELSIE WOODBURY, b. Aug. 26, 1882; m. Arthur Arnold Tenney, Oct. 4, 1905.



Children (surname *Tenney*):

1. *Constance*,<sup>11</sup> b. May 13, 1907.
2. *Joseph Fosdick*, b. Sept. 24, 1910; graduated from Annapolis; captain in the U. S. Navy.
3. *Charles Fosdick*, b. Sept. 19, 1912; d. Sept. 24, 1912.
- iv. MARION LAWRENCE, b. July 31, 1888; on the faculty of Alfred College, Alfred, N. Y.

42. FREDERICK<sup>9</sup> FOSDICK (*David*,<sup>8</sup> *David*,<sup>7</sup> *David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born at Groton, Mass., April 24, 1850. Like his brother Charles he was educated at home by his father, whose instruction the son always regarded as equal to a college course. In 1870 he started as a draftsman for a machine company in Fitchburg, and through years of experience he became one of the leading manufacturers of machinery in Massachusetts, being president of the Fitchburg Steam Engine Company, with which his brother Charles was connected. He was deeply interested in municipal affairs, and served as president of the Common Council for two years and as mayor of the city for two terms. His civic interests included hospitals and schools, and for nearly 40 years he was a deacon of the Rollstone Congregational Church. On April 24, 1873, he married Lucy M. Hill, of Groton; she died December, 1907. He married (2) Delia M. Elliott, October 24, 1911. He died July 7, 1924.

## Children (all by his first wife):

43. i. FREDERICK WOODBURY,<sup>10</sup> b. April 28, 1875.
  - ii. NELLIE, b. Nov. 5, 1878; graduated Smith College, 1901; d. May 11, 1917, at Wellesley College, where she was teaching.
  - iii. RICHARD COFFIN, b. April 20, 1883; attended Leland Stanford University; m. Alice Josephine Dunn, Feb. 11, 1907; lives in San Leandro, Calif.; no children.
  - iv. MIRIAM EDDY, b. Dec. 26, 1890. A graduate of Miss Lucy Wheelock's Kindergarten Training School in Boston, she has had a distinguished career in this field. She lives in Plymouth, Mass.
43. FREDERICK WOODBURY<sup>10</sup> FOSDICK (*Frederick*,<sup>9</sup> *David*,<sup>8</sup> *David*,<sup>7</sup> *David*,<sup>6</sup> *James*,<sup>5</sup> *Samuel II*,<sup>4</sup> *Samuel I*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *Stephen*<sup>1</sup>), born at Fitchburg, Mass., April 28, 1875. Graduated from Amherst College, 1898; from the Harvard Law School, 1901. Practiced law in Boston, Mass., with the firm Stone, Dallinger, Bancroft and Fosdick (later Dallinger and Fosdick). Appointed judge of the Superior Court of Massachusetts in 1920 by Governor Calvin Coolidge, he served in this capacity until his death. "His career on the bench was marked by integrity, devotion and high intelligence." (Resolution adopted at his death.) He shared with his uncle, Charles Fosdick, a deep interest in the history of his family, and he made available to the present author his voluminous papers. On December 29, 1909, he married Martha L. Morgan, graduate of Wellesley, 1906. He died February 24, 1943, No children.

## APPENDIX V

*The Children of Samuel<sup>5</sup> Fosdick III*

Lewis Fosdick's genealogy, with its subtitle, *The Oyster Bay Branch*, covered in comprehensive fashion the children and grandchildren of Samuel Fosdick III. Consequently it has seemed unnecessary to repeat in this volume the vast material which he developed. As I said in my introduction, this study is supplementary to Lewis Fosdick's book, and the two should be considered together. His book was published in 1891, and of course the genealogical tables covering the Oyster Bay branch of the family should be brought up to date. But I have had no opportunity to do this, and it remains the objective of some future study. In the listing below I have merely outlined the members of Samuel III's family, with a few miscellaneous notes.

*Samuel Fosdick III's children, all born at Oyster Bay, L. I.*

By Deborah Shadbolt.

- i. SILAS<sup>6</sup> FOSDICK, b. April 30, 1753; moved before the Revolution to Nine Partners, Dutchess County, N. Y., and died, aged 92, on his farm there, March 19, 1845, 53 years after the death of his father on the same farm. With his wife and two children, he was buried in the churchyard of the Baptist church in Netherwood, two or three miles from his farm, and their gravestones are still standing. It seems probable that some of the Michigan Fosdicks may be his descendants.
- ii. MORRIS FOSDICK, b. May 4, 1755; died 1760.
- iii. SARAH FOSDICK, b. July 16, 1757; m. William Brown, a farmer, and lived near her brother Silas in Pleasant Valley, Dutchess County, N. Y.; d. March 30, 1824; buried with her husband in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Pleasant Valley; gravestones still standing.

By Mary Wright.

- iv. SAMUEL FOSDICK, during his father's lifetime called "Samuel, Jr." and often referred to as "Samuel IV"; b. Dec., 1760; m. Elizabeth Thorne, a Quaker, and became himself a leading Quaker in Cox-sackie, on the west bank of the Hudson, where he owned a large farm. His name figures prominently in the church records of his time. He died Jan. 18, 1847, aged 86, "at peace with all the world." (Family record.) His children, particularly Henry C., had large families—Henry C.'s children being Moses, David,



Epenetus, Abigail, and Eliza—and their descendants are scattered throughout the Middle West. (Leonard S. Fosdick, professor of chemistry at Northwestern University, is the great-grandson of Henry C., and the family of the late Albert Kingsbury is descended from Eliza, Henry C.'s daughter.)

- v. NATHANIEL FOSDICK, b. 1762; m. in Nova Scotia; d. 1836.
- vi. ANNA FOSDICK, b. 1764; m. John Valentine, of Flushing, N. Y.; d. Sept. 16, 1827.
- vii. PRUDENCE FOSDICK, b. Feb. 22, 1766; m. Joseph Lawrence (or St. Lawrence); d. Oct. 30, 1854.
- viii. REBECCA FOSDICK, b. 1768; m. Richard Hines; both died in New York City on the same day, but the date is not known.
- ix. MORRIS FOSDICK, b. Nov. 21, 1770; taught school at Rockaway, L. I., and later at Springfield, near Jamaica; had a large and distinguished family; Lewis Fosdick, the genealogist, was his grandson. Most of the Fosdicks on Long Island today are his descendants. He died March 8, 1833.
- x. THOMAS FOSDICK, b. 1772; d. before 1798; name of wife unknown; one child, Hannah.
- xi. DEBORAH FOSDICK, b. 1774; unmarried; exact date of death unknown.
- xii. SOLOMON FOSDICK, b. April 8, 1776. The next lineal ancestor. See Chapters XV and XVI and Appendix VI.

## APPENDIX VI

*The Children of Solomon<sup>6</sup> Fosdick*

See statement at the beginning of Appendix V. Lewis Fosdick's book adequately covers Solomon's children, although it needs to be brought up to date. The following is merely a skeleton outline:

- i. SAMUEL<sup>7</sup> FOSDICK, b. March 8, 1799—"the handsomest man in the family—tall, straight, with black hair and black eyes. . . . His son, Hiram, had the blackest eyes of any person I have ever seen." (Jesse Fosdick's daughter, Elizabeth, to the author.) Samuel died in 1868. There are no descendants of his living today who bear the family name.
- ii. ANGELINE FOSDICK, b. Feb. 19, 1801; m. Nicholas Bonsteel; d. Jan. 21, 1875.
- iii. PRUDENCE FOSDICK, b. Dec. 13, 1803; m. Joseph Alger and lived in Boston, Erie County, N. Y.; d. there, 1848. Her great-granddaughter, Mrs. Earl Dye, lives today in the original Alger house.
- iv. MORRIS FOSDICK, b. Dec. 9, 1804; became one of the leading lawyers of Springville, N. Y.; d. Feb. 3, 1872. A barrel-chested man, with piercing black eyes and, later in life, a long white beard, he was a formidable adversary in a court room. Stories about him are legion. On one occasion he called a witness whom he was cross-examining "a hog-faced old fool"—a description which clung to the unfortunate victim for the rest of his life. "A man of unimpeachable integrity," said the local newspaper at Morris' death. "His fidelity to official trusts was proverbial. . . . A bachelor through life, he was eminently endowed with the peculiar characteristics of that honorable fraternity."
- v. ALICE HERMION FOSDICK, b. June 21, 1807; m. Stillman Andrews; d. 1888.
- vi. ELIZABETH GURNEY FOSDICK, b. May 1, 1809; m. Camden C. Lake; d. Nov. 19, 1874.
- vii. MARY THORNE FOSDICK, b. July 4, 1811; m. James Getty; d. Jan. 16, 1891.
- viii. JOHN SPENCER FOSDICK, b. March 3, 1817. The next lineal ancestor. See Chapter XVII and Appendix VII.
- ix. JESSE THORNE FOSDICK, b. April 28, 1819; prominent in railroad business in Salamanca, N. Y.; m. (1) Susan B. Jones; (2) Elizabeth Sweet; d. Dec. 7, 1901. None of his descendants bears the family name.



## APPENDIX VII

*The Children of John Spencer<sup>7</sup> Fosdick*

By Eunice Andrews.

- i. CHARLES AUSTIN<sup>8</sup> FOSDICK, b. Sept. 6, 1842. Enlisted as a landsman in the U. S. Navy in the Civil War and lived through much of the fighting on the Mississippi River. In 1865 he was honorably discharged from service with a bullet in his leg, a broken nose, and a sabre cut across his head. He had already begun writing books of adventure for boys, and his first book, *Frank the Young Naturalist*, under the pseudonym of "Harry Castlemon," was published in 1865, followed in rapid succession by the *Gunboat Series: Frank Before Vicksburg*, *Frank on the Lower Mississippi*, etc. These in turn were followed by the *Sportsman's Club Series*, the *Frank Nelson Series*, the *Rod and Gun Series*, etc. For over 35 years he continued his writing, publishing altogether 60 volumes, and making the name Harry Castlemon known to two generations of boys in the English-speaking world. (See Jacob Blanck, *Harry Castlemon, Boys' Own Author* [New York, 1941] for a complete bibliography of Castlemon's works.) He married Sarah Stoddard at Villa Ridge, Ill., Sept. 17, 1873, and in 1875 moved to Westfield, N. Y. His wife died March 8, 1904, and he died August 22, 1915, at the home of his son Charles in Hamburg, N. Y. He was buried in the cemetery at Westfield.

Children:

1. *John Stoddard*,<sup>9</sup> b. Aug. 23, 1874; farmer; m. Edna Miller, Nov. 9, 1904, and lived at Junction City, Colo. Children: (1) Frank Stoddard<sup>10</sup> b. Aug. 7, 1906; (2) Catherine Elizabeth, b. Aug. 9, 1908; (3) Walter Austin, b. Oct. 30, 1909; (4) Florence Lucille, b. Sept. 25, 1911; (5) Stephen, b. Aug., 1915.
2. *Gertrude Andrews*, b. Aug. 12, 1875; d. Aug. 13, 1876.
3. *Charles Hosmer*, b. Feb. 27, 1880; engineer, devoting most of his life to the New York State Highway Department; m. Elizabeth Hale; d. May 16, 1941. Children: (1) George N.,<sup>10</sup> b. Oct. 22, 1900; m. Marion Hagle; one child: Douglas N.,<sup>11</sup> b. Nov. 29, 1925; (2) Arthur S., b. Nov. 22, 1903; d. Dec. 14, 1923.

By Mary Blain.

- ii. JOHN SPENCER FOSDICK, JR., b. Aug. 14, 1846; d. Sept. 2, 1847.
- iii. WILLIAM MORRIS FOSDICK, b. March 14, 1850; d. Sept. 19, 1850.
- iv. FRANK SHELDON FOSDICK, b. March 11, 1851. The next lineal ancestor. See Chapter XVIII and Appendix VIII.
- v. DORA FOSDICK, b. Feb. 22, 1863. She was the daughter of John Spencer Fosdick's older brother Samuel and became a member of her uncle's family shortly after her birth. By her contemporaries she was supposed to be John Spencer's daughter, and John and his wife always regarded her as such, entering her birth in the family Bible as their own child. She married Frank E. Denison, Dec. 25, 1894; d. Jan. 25, 1937; he d. Aug. 14, 1948.

Children (surname *Denison*):

1. *Edwin F.*,<sup>9</sup> b. Sept. 25, 1898; attended Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Phila., pastor Baptist church in West Portland, N. Y.; m. Caroline Maiser, Feb. 22, 1928.
2. *Glenn M.*, b. Nov. 25, 1902; graduated Colgate, 1923; M. Ed., University of Rochester, 1945; principal, Charlotte High School, Rochester; m. Rhoda Taylor Torrance (Wells College, 1925), Dec. 26, 1925.

Children (surname *Denison*):

1. *William Clark*,<sup>10</sup> b. June 1, 1928; Oberlin College, 1950; M. A., 1952; m. Margaret R. Mellinger, Sept. 11, 1948; one child, Robert Ford,<sup>11</sup> b. May 13, 1953.
2. *Ann Fosdick*, b. Feb. 28, 1931; attended Antioch College; m. Franklin Clark Cowley, April 4, 1950; one child (surname *Cowley*), Clark Denison, b. Jan. 5, 1951.



## APPENDIX VIII

*The Children of Frank Sheldon<sup>8</sup> Fosdick*

By Amie Weaver.

- i. HARRY EMERSON<sup>9</sup> FOSDICK, b. in Buffalo, N. Y., May 24, 1878; graduated Colgate University, 1900; Union Theological Seminary, 1904; M. A. Columbia, 1908; pastor, First Baptist Church, Montclair, N. J., 1904-1915; professor of practical theology at Union Theological Seminary, 1915-1946; preacher at First Presbyterian Church, N. Y. City, 1919-1925; pastor, Park Avenue Baptist Church (later Riverside Church), New York, 1926-1946; author of many books, including *The Meaning of Prayer*, *The Meaning of Faith*, *The Meaning of Service*, *Christianity and Progress*, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, *On Being a Real Person*, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, *As I See Religion*, *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, *The Man from Nazareth*, *A Faith for Tough Times*, *The Hope of the World*, *The Secret of Victorious Living*, *The Power to See It Through*, *Living Under Tension*, *A Great Time to Be Alive*, *On Being Fit to Live With*, etc. Honorary degrees: D. D., Colgate, New York University, Brown, Yale, University of Glasgow, Princeton, Union, Boston University, Harvard; LL. D., Michigan, Rochester, Williams; S. T. D., Ohio University, Columbia; L. H. D., Colby; Litt. D., Dickinson. Married Florence Allen Whitney (Smith College, 1900; Smith, L. H. D., 1950), Aug. 16, 1904.

Children:

1. *Elinor Whitney*,<sup>10</sup> b. Sept. 19, 1911; graduated Smith College, 1933, and Johns Hopkins (M. D.), 1937; M. P. H. (Columbia), 1952; on staff of World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 1949-1951; m. Roger S. Downs (Williams College, 1932; Harvard, M. D., 1936), July 11, 1939; he died Feb. 6, 1945. Children (surname *Downs*): Patricia,<sup>11</sup> b. Sept. 13, 1940; Stephen Fosdick, b. June 5, 1942.
2. *Dorothy*, b. April 17, 1913; graduated Smith College, 1934; Ph. D. (Columbia), 1939; on faculty of Smith College, 1938-1942; on staff of the State Department (Washington, D. C.), 1942-1953; at present, on faculty, Columbia University. Honorary degrees: LL. D., Wellesley, Keuka, Lindenwood, Russell Sage; Litt. D., Rutgers.
- ii. ETHEL DUNNING FOSDICK, b. Nov. 24, 1880; d. March 22, 1881.
- iii. RAYMOND BLAINE FOSDICK, b. in Buffalo, N. Y., June 9, 1883; graduated Princeton University, 1905; M. A., 1906; New York Law School, 1908; assistant Corporation counsel, N. Y. City, 1909-1910, and Commissioner of Accounts, 1910-1913; special representative of Secretary of War on Mexican border, 1916; chairman of the Commission on Training Camp Activities of the War and Navy Departments, 1917-1918; special representative of War Department in France, 1918-1919; civilian aide to General Pershing, 1919; awarded Distinguished Service Medal; Under Secretary General of the League of Nations, 1919-1920; member of law firm (Curtis, Fosdick and Belknap), N. Y., 1920-1936; president,

The Rockefeller Foundation, 1936-1948; special consultant to the Secretary of War, 1941-1945. Author of *European Police Systems*, *American Police Systems*, *Keeping Our Fighters Fit*, *The Old Savage in the New Civilization*, *Toward Liquor Control* (with Albert Scott), *The Story of The Rockefeller Foundation*, *Within Our Power*. Honorary degrees: LL. D., Colgate, Colorado College, Princeton, Amherst, Columbia, Wesleyan, University of Edinburgh, Swarthmore, Dartmouth. Married (1) Winifred Finlay (Wellesley, 1910), Dec. 2, 1910; she died April 3, 1932; (Children: Susan, b. Sept. 13, 1915, dec.; Raymond Blaine, Jr., b. June 7, 1921, dec.); (2) Elizabeth R. Miner (Smith, 1918), April 21, 1936.

- iv. EDITH WELLINGTON FOSDICK, b. June 9, 1883 (twin of Raymond B.); graduated Vassar College, 1906; M. A. (Columbia), 1931; social worker and teacher; on staff of Y. M. C. A. in France during World War I; taught in Kobe College, Japan; Ginling College, Nanking, China; the American College at Athens, Greece; and the Woman's College of Istanbul, Turkey; was a member of the faculty of the last named institution for more than ten years; d. April 7, 1952.

By Myrtilla Constantine.

- v. RUTH SHELDON FOSDICK, b. in Buffalo, N. Y., Jan. 24, 1909; graduated Mt. Holyoke College, 1930; M. A. (Holyoke), 1933; teacher and writer; author of *Boy of the Pyramids*, a children's book; m. Rufus H. Jones (Harvard, 1928), March 11, 1939.

Children (surname Jones):

1. *Deborah Fosdick*,<sup>10</sup> b. Dec. 26, 1941.
2. *Rufus H., Jr.*, b. Feb. 1, 1944.
3. *Candace Lord*, b. Nov. 29, 1947.





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Stephen Hosdick

1583 ~ 1664

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John Hosdick

1626 ~ 1716

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Samuel Hosdick I

1655 ~ 1700

|

Samuel Hosdick II

1684 ~ 1784

|

Samuel Hosdick III

1710 ~ 1792

|

Solomon Hosdick

1776 ~ 1838

|

John Spencer Hosdick

1817 ~ 1892

|

Frank Sheldon Hosdick

1851 ~ 1927



